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new MUSICAL EXPRESS

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RAY DAVIES and FRANKIE MILLER wrestle with hefty issues.
Pages 19 and 21

REGGAE
"Me no political man." Inside BOB MARLEY'S U.K. hideaway.
Interview pages 27-29

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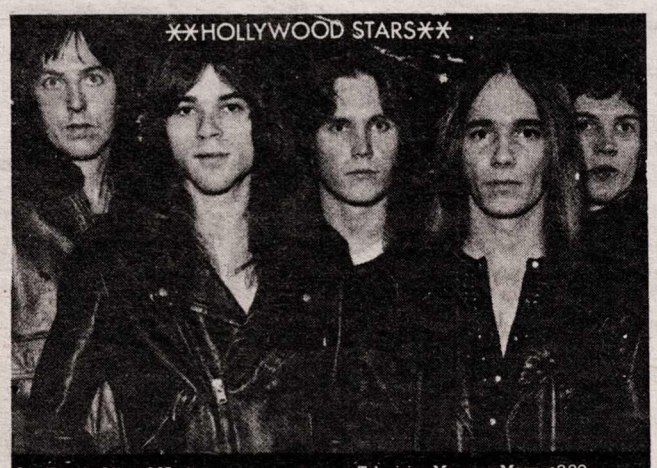

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FIVE YEARS AGO

Week ending April 22, 1972

Last Week	This Week		
2	1	AMAZING GRACE	Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, Pipes, Drums and Band (RCA)
1	2	WITHOUT YOU	Nilsson (RCA)
3	3	SWEET TALKIN' GUY	Chiffons (London)
10	3	BACK OFF BOOGALOO	Ringo Starr (Apple)
4	5	HOLD YOUR HEAD UP	Argent (Epic)
15	6	DEBORAH	Tyrannosaurus Rex (Magno Fly)
9	7	HEART OF GOLD	Neil Young (Reprise)
17	8	RUN RUN RUN	Jo Jo Gunne (Asylum)
13	9	THE YOUNG NEW MEXICAN PUPPETEER	Tom Jones (Decca)
5	10	BEG, STEAL OR BORROW	New Seekers (Polydor)

TEN YEARS AGO

Week ending April 22nd, 1967

Last Week	This Week		
2	1	PUPPET ON A STRING	Sandie Shaw (Pye)
1	2	SOMETHIN' STUPID	Frank and Nancy Sinatra (Reprise)
4	3	A LITTLE BIT ME, A LITTLE BIT YOU	Monkees (RCA)
6	4	HA HA SAID THE CLOWN	Manfred Mann (Fontana)
3	5	RELEASE ME	Engelbert Humperdinck(Decca)
5	6	THIS IS MY SONG	Harry Secombe (Philips)
11	7	PURPLE HAZE	Jimi Hendrix (Track)
12	8	BERNADETTE	Four Tops (Tamla Motown)
8	9	IT'S ALL OVER	Cliff Richard (Columbia)
7	10	SIMON SMITH AND HIS AMAZING DANCING BEAR	Alan Price Set (Decca)

15 YEARS AGO

Week ending April 20, 1962

Last Week	This Week		
1	1	WONDERFUL LAND	Shadows (Columbia)
2	2	HEY BABY	Bruce Channel (Mercury)
4	3	WHEN MY LITTLE GIRL IS SMILING	Jimmy Justice (Pye)
3	4	DREAM BABY	Roy Orbison (London)
4	5	TWISTIN' THE NIGHT AWAY	Sam Cooke (RCA)
14	6	SPEAK TO ME PRETTY	Brenda Lee (Brunswick)
7	7	HEY LITTLE GIRL	Del Shannon (London)
6	8	TELL ME WHAT HE SAID	Helen Shapiro (Columbia)
8	9	CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE	Elvis Presley (RCA)
9	10	NEVER GOODBYE	Karl Denver (Decca)

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

C·H·A·R·T·S

SINGLES

Week ending April 23, 1977

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in chart	Highest position
1	(1)	KNOWING ME KNOWING YOU	Abba (Epic)	8	1
2	(2)	GOING IN WITH MY EYES OPEN	David Soul (Private Stock)	5	2
3	(9)	SUNNY	Boney M (Atlantic)	6	3
4	(3)	WHEN	Showaddywaddy (Arista)	7	3
5	(4)	RED SPELLS DANGER	Billy Ocean (GTO)	5	4
5	(17)	SIR DUKE	Stevie Wonder (Motown)	2	5
7	(7)	FREE	Deniece Williams (CBS)	3	7
8	(6)	I DON'T WANT TO PUT A HOLD ON YOU	Berni Flint (EMI)	5	4
9	(8)	YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A STAR	Marilyn McCoo/Billy Davis Jr. (ABC)	5	8
10	(11)	OH BOY	Brotherhood Of Man (Pye)	6	9
11	(25)	HOW MUCH LOVE	Leo Sayer (Chrysalis)	3	11
12	(12)	LAY BACK IN THE ARMS OF SOMEONE	Smokie (Rak)	6	12
13	(13)	MOODY BLUE	Elvis Presley (RCA)	7	5
14	(14)	PEARL'S A SINGER	Elkie Brooks (A&M)	3	14
15	(16)	LONELY BOY	Andrew Gold (Asylum)	2	15
16	(19)	WHODUNIT	Tavares (Capital)	2	16
17	(5)	SOUND AND VISION	David Bowie (RCA)	10	4
18	(26)	SOLSBURY HILL	Peter Gabriel (Charisma)	2	18
19	(24)	I WANNA GET NEXT TO YOU	Rose Royce (MCA)	3	18
20	(10)	CHANSON D'AMOUR	Manhattan Transfer (Atlantic)	11	1
20	(20)	HAVE I THE RIGHT	Dead End Kids (CBS)	2	20
22	(22)	GIMME SOME	Brendon (Magnet)	2	22
23	(15)	LOVE HIT ME	Maxine Nightingale (United Artists)	6	14
24	(—)	HOTEL CALIFORNIA	Eagles (Asylum)	1	24
25	(29)	THE SHUFFLE	Van McCoy (H & L)	2	25
26	(—)	MARQUEE MOON	Television (Elektra)	1	26
27	(—)	SMOKE ON THE WATER	Deep Purple (Purple)	1	27
28	(27)	TORN BETWEEN TWO LOVERS	Mary MacGregor (Ariola)	9	4
29	(30)	A STAR IS BORN (EVERGREEN)	Barbra Streisand (CBS)	2	29
30	(18)	TOGETHER	O. C. Smith (Caribou)	4	18

BUBBLING UNDER . . .
SINGLES: ANOTHER FUNNY HONEYMOON — David Dundas (Air); 7000 DOLLARS AND YOU — Stylistics (H&L); GOOD MORNING JUDGE — 10cc (Philips); AIN'T GONNA BUMP NO MORE — Joe Tex (Epic).

ALBUMS

Week ending April 23, 1977

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in chart	Highest position
1	(1)	ARRIVAL	Abba (Epic)	22	1
2	(2)	ENDLESS FLIGHT	Leo Sayer (Chrysalis)	15	2
3	(3)	PORTRAIT OF SINATRA	Frank Sinatra (Reprise)	7	1
4	(4)	THE SHADOWS 20 GOLDEN GREATS	(EMI)	12	1
5	(5)	HOLLIES LIVE HITS	(Polydor)	5	5
6	(6)	ANIMALS	Pink Floyd (Harvest)	11	2
7	(14)	WORKS VOL. 1	Emerson Lake & Palmer (Atlantic)	4	7
8	(9)	ABBA GREATEST HITS	(Epic)	55	1
9	(8)	RUMOURS	Fleetwood Mac (Warner Bros)	9	8
10	(10)	STATUS QUO LIVE	(Phonogram)	8	5
11	(16)	PETER GABRIEL	(Charisma)	6	11
12	(23)	HOTEL CALIFORNIA	Eagles (Asylum)	17	4
13	(7)	COMING OUT	Manhattan Transfer (Atlantic)	6	6
14	(21)	THE UNFORGETTABLE GLENN MILLER	(RCA)	3	14
15	(18)	A NEW WORLD RECORD	Electric Light Orchestra (Jet)	20	8
16	(11)	EVERY FACE TELLS A STORY	Cliff Richard (EMI)	6	11
17	(12)	EVITA	Various Artists (MCA)	15	1
18	(22)	A STAR IS BORN	Sound Track (CBS)	2	18
19	(20)	LOW	David Bowie (RCA)	14	7
20	(13)	THE BEST OF JOHN DENVER II	(RCA)	6	13
21	(25)	SONGS IN THE KEY OF LIFE	Stevie Wonder (Motown)	27	1
22	(24)	BARRY WHITE GREATEST HITS VOL II	(20th Century)	2	22
23	(15)	IN YOUR MIND	Bryan Ferry (Polydor)	9	8
24	(19)	DAVID SOUL	(Private Stock)	20	2
25	(—)	THE CLASH	Clash (CBS)	1	25
26	(26)	BURNING SKY	Bad Company (Island)	5	20
27	(—)	SMOKIE GREATEST HITS	Smokie (Rak)	1	27
28	(27)	LIVING LEGENDS	Everly Brothers (Warwick)	2	27
29	(17)	20 GREAT HEARTBREAKERS	(K-Tel)	11	3
30	(—)	MAGIC OF DEMIS ROUSSOS	(Philips)	1	30

BUBBLING UNDER . . .
ALBUMS: EVEN IN THE QUIETEST MOMENTS — Supertramp (A&M); PLEASE GET MY NAME RIGHT — Twiggy (Mercury); THE MOTOWN STORY — Various (Tamla Motown); MARQUEE MOON — Television (Elektra).

U.S. SINGLES

Week ending April 23, 1977

This Week	Last Week		
1	(8)	HOTEL CALIFORNIA	Eagles
2	(1)	DON'T GIVE UP ON US	David Soul
3	(7)	SOUTHERN NIGHTS	Glen Campbell
4	(5)	I'VE GOT LOVE ON MY MIND	Natalie Cole
5	(6)	SO INTO YOU	Atlanta Rhythm Section
6	(2)	RICH GIRL	Daryl Hall & John Oates
7	(9)	RIGHT TIME OF THE NIGHT	Jennifer Warnes
8	(10)	LIDO SHUFFLE	Boz Scaggs
9	(12)	WHEN I NEED YOU	Leo Sayer
10	(11)	TRYIN' TO LOVE TWO	William Bell
11	(3)	DON'T LEAVE ME THIS WAY	Thelma Houston
12	(14)	I WANNA GET NEXT TO YOU	Rose Royce
13	(15)	COULDN'T GET IT RIGHT	Climax Blues Band
14	(19)	I'M YOUR BOOGIE MAN	K.C. & The Sunshine Band
15	(18)	ANGEL IN YOUR ARMS	Hot
16	(4)	THE THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE	10cc
17	(13)	DANCING QUEEN	Abba
18	(21)	CAN'T STOP DANCIN'	Captain & Tennille
19	(24)	CALLING DR. LOVE	Kiss
20	(23)	YOUR LOVE	McCoo & Davis
21	(27)	SIR DUKE	Stevie Wonder
22	(16)	LOVE THEME FROM "A STAR IS BORN"	Barbra Streisand
23	(17)	CARRY ON WAYWARD SON	Kansas
24	(20)	MAYBE I'M AMAZED	Wings
25	(22)	DISCO LUCY (I LOVE LUCY THEME)	Wilton Place Street Band
26	(—)	HELLO STRANGER	Yvonne Elliman
27	(—)	DANCING MAN	Q
28	(25)	HERE COME THOSE TEARS AGAIN	Jackson Browne
29	(—)	FEELS LIKE THE FIRST TIME	Foreigner
30	(29)	WEEKEND IN NEW ENGLAND	Barry Manilow

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

U.S. ALBUMS

Week ending April 23, 1977

This Week	Last Week		
1	(1)	HOTEL CALIFORNIA	Eagles
2	(2)	RUMOURS	Fleetwood Mac
3	(3)	A STAR IS BORN	Streisand / Kristofferson
4	(4)	BOSTON	Boston
5	(6)	LEFTOVERTURE	Kansas
6	(7)	SONGS IN THE KEY OF LIFE	Stevie Wonder
7	(5)	THIS ONE'S FOR YOU	Barry Manilow
8	(9)	NIGHT MOVES	Bob Seger
9	(11)	UNPREDICTABLE	Natalie Cole
10	(8)	ANIMALS	Pink Floyd
11	(12)	SONGS FROM THE WOOD	Jethro Tull
12	(10)	LOVE AT THE GREEK	Neil Diamond
13	(19)	A ROCK AND ROLL ALTERNATIVE	Atlanta Rhythm Section
14	(13)	YEAR OF THE CAT	Al Stewart
15	(21)	WORKS VOLUME 1	Emerson, Lake & Palmer
16	(18)	BURNIN' SKY	Bad Company
17	(16)	FLY LIKE AN EAGLE	Steve Miller Band
18	(14)	ASK RUFUS	Rufus featuring Chaka Khan
19	(15)	IN FLIGHT	George Benson
20	(20)	A NEW WORLD RECORD	Electric Light Orchestra
21	(17)	GREATEST HITS	Linda Ronstadt
22	(24)	SILK DEGREES	Boz Scaggs
23	(26)	JEFF BECK WITH THE JAN HAMMER GROUP LIVE	
24	(50)	MARVIN GAYE AT THE LONDON PALLADIUM	
25	(22)	WINGS OVER AMERICA	Wings
26	(54)	ROCKY	Original Motion Picture Score
27	(29)	CAROLINA DREAMS	Marshall Tucker Band
28	(30)	BIGGER THAN BOTH OF US	Hall & Oates
29	(51)	GO FOR YOUR GUNS	Isley Brothers
30	(25)	SLEEPWALKER	Kinks

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

QUEEN GIGS

QUEEN are confirmed for their first British tour for two years, taking in ten major dates and climaxing in a show at London's Earls Court on Spring Bank Holiday Monday. The gigs follow their U.S. tour and a short series of European dates starting on May 8.

The band headline at BRISTOL Hippodrome (May 23 and 24), SOUTHAMPTON Gaumont (26 and 27), STAFFORD New Bingley Hall (29), GLASGOW Apollo (30 and 31).

Ten concerts round Britain

LIVERPOOL Empire (June 2 and 3) and LONDON Earls Court (6).

Earls Court ticket prices are £4, £3 and £2, and at Stafford they are all at the one price of £3.50. At all other venues, admission is £3.50, £2.75 and £2. Tickets go on sale to personal callers at all box-offices and usual agencies, including Harlequin and Virgin record shops, on April 30 at 10am.

Postal bookings are being accepted immediately. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the theatre concerned, followed by the name 'Queen'. The one exception is Earls Court, where payment is made to "Earls Court and Olympia Ltd. (Queen)"; The address is Earls Court Box-Office, Exhibition Building, Warwick Road, London, SW.5.

Tickets are limited to four per application (six at Earls Court), and a stamped self-addressed envelope should be enclosed with every postal booking. All shows start at 8pm, except Stafford where it begins at 7.30. The tour is promoted by Harvey Goldsmith in conjunction with Queen's manager John Reid.

● Details of the official Silver Jubilee concert at Earls Court on Saturday, June 4, are still awaited. But Queen's appearance at this venue two days later end speculation that they would be topping the Jubilee show.

FEELGOODS with new guitarist John Mayo (second right)

Feelgoods replace Wilko

UNKNOWN ESSEX guitarist John Mayo is the replacement for Wilko Johnson in Dr. Feelgood. Mayo, 23, is rehearsing with the band for their short British tour opening May 12.

Formerly with local bands 747 and Halcyon, he was recommended to the Feelgoods by George Hatcher, with whom he played briefly.

The new Dr. Feelgood album, now officially titled "Sneakin' Suspicion" and set for May release by United Artists, does not feature Mayo. It was completed before the departure of Wilko, whose future plans remain undecided.

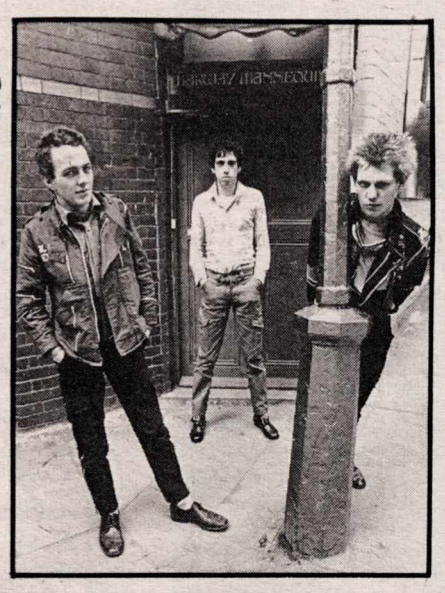
Clash top new wave package

THE CLASH, who recently opted out of supporting John Cale because the tour "wasn't radical enough", are instead headlining their own tour throughout March. The 27-venue itinerary — including a prestige date at London Rainbow with four other new bands — is claimed as the first major tour by a new-wave band, taking in leading concert halls and colleges.

Dates are Guildford Civic Hall (May 1), Chester Rascals (2), Birmingham Barbarella's (3), Swindon Affair (4), Liverpool Eric's (5), Aberdeen University (6), Edinburgh Playhouse (7), Manchester Electric Circus (8), London Rainbow (9), Kidderminster Town Hall (10), Nottingham Palais (12), Leicester Polytechnic (13), Plymouth Fiesta (15), Swansea University (16), Leeds Polytechnic (17), Chelmsford Chancellor Hall (18), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (19), Newcastle University (20), St Alban's City Hall (21), Maidenhead Skindles (22), Stafford Top Of The World (23), Cardiff Top Rank (24), Brighton Polytechnic (25), Bristol Colston Hall (26), Cromer West Runton Pavilion (27), Canterbury Odeon (28) and Dunstable California (30).

At Edinburgh (May 7) and on the last ten dates (20-30), The Clash head a package which also features The Jam, Buzzcocks, Subway Sect and The Slits. This package also plays the Rainbow (all tickets £2.20), except that The Prefects replace The Slits. All other dates are solo Clash, although one support act may be added later.

Clash drummer for the tour is Nicky Headdon. Rest of line-up: Mick Jones (lead guitar, vocals), Joe Strummer (lead vocals, guitar), Paul Simonon (bass).



VIBRATORS TOUR

THE VIBRATORS, who recently switched from Rak to CBS, start their first major headlining tour this month. So far 22 dates have been confirmed, but the final total should be at least 30. And the band's new single will be released during the tour.

Gigs set are at London Kensington Nashville (April 29), Southampton University (30), London Marquee (May 1), Tolworth Toby Jug (2), London Twickenham Winning Post (4), Croydon Red Deer (5), Brighton Embassy Cinema (6), Hastings Pier Pavilion (7), Manchester Chorlton Oaks (10), London Camden Dingwalls (11), London Royal College of Art (13), Dudley J.B.'s (14), Birmingham Barbarella's (17), Wolverhampton Lafayette (20), Newport Roundabout (25), London Southbank Polytechnic (27), Darlington Incognito (June 1), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (3), Manchester Electric Circus (4), Barrow Maxim's (5), Edinburgh Tiffany's (6) and Liverpool Eric's Club (10).

Under their new worldwide deal with CBS, The Vibrators have already recorded five tracks — "Bad Time", "Sweet Sweet Heart", "Wrecked On You", "Petrol" and "No Heart" — and two of these will be selected for the upcoming single. Their one previous single, "We Vibrate!", was issued during their short spell with Rak.

PIRATES STEP OUT

THE PIRATES, who re-formed at the end of last year, a decade after Johnny Kidd's death, start a series of dates this weekend running through until the end of May.

The gigs build up to the release of their first album, recorded earlier this month live at the Nashville in London. The trio — with their original line-up of Mick Green, Johnny Spence and Frank Farley — are set for the following dates, with more still to be finalised:

Kidderminster College of Education (tomorrow, Friday), Liverpool Eric's Club (Saturday), Canterbury Kent University (April 25), London New Victoria supporting Chuck Berry (29), Derby Bishop Lonsdale College (30), Winchester King Alfred College (May 4), London University (6), Sheffield University (7), London Camden Dingwalls (12), Chichester Bishop Otter College (14), London Marquee (16), Bromley Saxon Tavern (20), Hereford College of Education (27) and Bolton Technical College (28).

'EVITA' SET FOR LONDON STAGE

EVITA, the Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice rock opera which has already sold over 750,000 copies worldwide as a double album, is to be presented on the London stage next spring. America was expected to claim the world premiere, but impresario Robert Stigwood has decided instead to open in London — where his production of the same composers' *Jesus Christ Superstar* is still running after five years.

Who will play the lead role of Eva Peron has not yet been decided. Faye Dunaway is reported to be interested, and Julie Covington, whose recording of the show's hit song "Don't Cry For Me Argentina" has sold 1½ million copies, is also in the running.

Director is Hal Prince, who worked on the stage versions of *West Side Story, Cabaret* and *Fiddler On The Roof*, and has just finished making the film *A Little Night Music* with Elizabeth Taylor.

Stigwood is currently involved in the film *Saturday Night* starring John Travolta, and his subsequent commitments include the movies *Grease* and *Sergeant Pepper*, both of which go into production later this year.

New week of Pop Proms?

A PLAN TO stage a week-long series of summer concerts, all at the same venue but with a different headliner every night, was revealed this week by Roy Guest — head of the new promotions division of the Evolution agency.

Guest was responsible for a similar venture two years ago — the Pop Proms at London's Alexandra Palace — though he says his 1977 project would not necessarily be staged in London.

"It would depend on where I could find a suitable venue," says Guest, who is also lining up an autumn concert tour by Tom Paxton.

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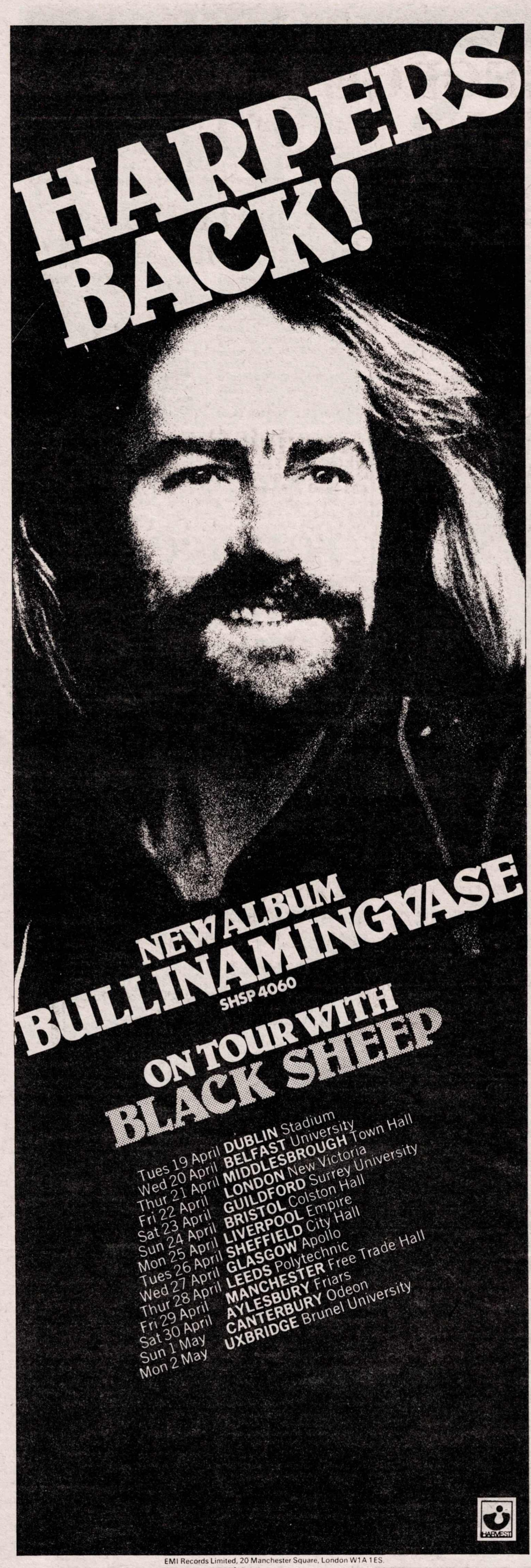
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News Desk

How to book: full details

MARLEY GIGS AT RAINBOW

BOB MARLEY and The Wailers are now officially confirmed for an early June season at London Rainbow. It seemed at one point that the booking might not materialise — because of a feedback from the group's last London gigs, when rioting caused extensive damage. But a guarantee has been given that security arrangements will be doubled.

Officially The Wailers play four successive nights from June 1, but promoter Alec Leslie has also pencilled in June 5 and 6 — to be confirmed if the first four sell out. So it is virtually certain that they will play the Rainbow from June 1 to 6 inclusive.

At present tickets are available only for the first four nights, and these are on sale now at the box-office, priced £4, £3 and £2. Alternatively, postal application may be made to the Rainbow Theatre, 232 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

Marley and the band will not be playing any provincial gigs because their London season is the climax of a seven-country European tour, opening on May 10 and including their first-ever visits to France and Italy.

Their new album, "Exodus", is scheduled for May 21 release by Island. But contrary to reports elsewhere, their latest single "Waiting In Vain" will not be issued this month. It is not now expected until after the album.

ON THE ROAD

DELROY WILSON flies in from Jamaica for a British tour at **London Fulham** Greyhound (April 19), **London Peckham** Bouncing Ball (30), **Bristol** Bamboo Club (May 6 and 7), **Sheffield** Top Rank (10), **Leicester** Palais (12), **Manchester** Mayflower (13), Birmingham Rebecca's (14), **Leeds** Polytechnic (20), **Northampton** Town Hall (21), **Wolverhampton** 67 Club (27), **London** Nightingale Ballroom (28), **London Hammersmith** Palais (29), **Ipswich** The Manor (June 2), **Reading** Caribbean Club (3) and **Luton** Recreation Centre (4).

COUSIN JOE from New Orleans begins another British tour this weekend. Gigs so far confirmed for the veteran bluesman are **Stafford** North Staffs Polytechnic (tomorrow, Friday), **Coventry** Lanchester Polytechnic (April 25), **Leicester** Jazz Society (26), **Plymouth** Sam's Club (27), Portsmouth Polytechnic (28), **Weymouth** College (29), **Newcastle** People's Theatre (May 1), **Leeds** University (2), **London Southbank** Polytechnic (3), **Leicester** Polytechnic (4), Lancaster New Planet City (5) and **Glasgow** Third Eye Centre (13).

JOHNNY MATHIS is set for a string of 13 provincial concerts, in addition to his previously-reported week at the **London** Palladium from May 9. Dates are **Portsmouth** Guildhall (April 27), **Bristol** Colston Hall (28), **Paignton** Festival Theatre (29), **Bournemouth** Winter Gardens (30), **Eastbourne** Congress (May 1), **Stoke** Jollees (3), **Blackpool** Opera House (4), **Sheffield** City Hall (5), **Manchester** Free Trade Hall (6), **Southport** New Theatre (7), **Sunderland** Empire (19), **Glasgow** Apollo (20) and **Aberdeen** Capitol (21).

KTC, the Midlands-based new-wave band, have gigs at **Swindon** Brunel Rooms (April 26), **London** Marquee (29), **High Wycombe** Nags Head (30), **Bristol** Granary (May 5), **Dudley** J.B.'s Club (6), **London Kensington** Nashville (7), **Wolverhampton** Lafayette (18), **London Covent Garden** Rock Garden (20), **London Fulham** Greyhound (21) and **Aylesbury** King's Head (22).

MARINELLA, Greece's top singer, headlines **London** concerts at the Royal Albert Hall (May 3) and the New Victoria (5 and 6).

KEVIN AYERS' tour itinerary suffered a couple of printing errors when listed in *NME* last week. The first two gigs — **Leicester** (April 27) and **Glasgow** (28) — were shown correctly, but he then plays **Edinburgh** University (29) and **Stirling** University (30). All May dates remain as reported last week.

JOHNNY THUNDER and the Hearbreakers' gig on May 13 has been switched to **Warrington** Parr Hall, where they top a new-wave bill also featuring Slaughter & The Dogs, The Adverts and The Buzzcocks.

"GODSPELL" begins another national tour at the end of this month with a new production including Jeremy Browne, Mark Jefferis, Terry Molloy, Louise Papillon and Neil Reid. Dates set so far are **Hillingdon** Alfred Beck Centre (April 27-May 7), **Bath** Theatre Royal (May 9, week), **Birmingham** Alexandra Theatre (16, week) and **Wolverhampton** Grand (23, week).

MAX ROMEO and **BURNING SPEAR** are coming to Britain to co-headline a short series of concerts in the early summer, probably at the end of June. No precise dates or venues have been finalised.

BUZZCOCKS spend most of May recording a new single, the probable tracks being "What Do I Get" and "Orgasm Addict". Between sessions they have gigs at **Manchester** Band On The Wall (May 2), **Birmingham** Rebecca's (5), **Warrington** Parr Hall (13) and **Manchester** Electric Circus (29), and a few others are being finalised.

ALBION DANCE BAND are in concert at **London's** new National Theatre on May 4. They are only the second musical act, after The Chieftains, to play this venue.

STRETCH play **Aberdeen** Palace Ballroom (tonight, Thursday), **Stirling** University (this Saturday), **Manchester** Didsbury College (April 27), **London Camden Town** Music Machine (29), **Strode** Theatre (May 7), **Bolton** Institute of Technology (June 4), **Milton Keynes** College of Education (17) and **Borehamwood** Civic Hall (24). These are their only gigs between recording sessions for their third Anchor album.

LIVERPOOL EXPRESS, whose new single "Dreamin' " is released by Warners on April 29, have May dates at **Great Yarmouth** Racecourse (5), **Bolton** Nevada (7), **High Wycombe** Chiltern Hundreds Club (11), **Kirkby** Kirby Suite (20), **Sunderland** Empire (21), **Southend** Talk Of The South (24), **Crewe** Alsager College (27), and **Fishguard** Frenchman's Motel (28).

WIDOWMAKER (May 13) and **BURLESQUE** (June 2) are confirmed for billtopping concerts at **London Kingsway** Sound Circus.

DENNIS WATERMAN of "Sweeney" fame is in concert at **Ashton-Under-Lyne** Tameside Theatre (this Saturday), **Bedford** Nite Spot (Sunday), **Folkestone** Leas Cliff Hall (April 30), **Watford** Palace Theatre (May 8), **Basildon** Towngate Theatre (14), **London Kingsway** Sound Circus (20), **Cardiff** New Theatre (July 17), **Shanklin I.o.W.** Theatre (24) and **Hornchurch** Queen's Theatre (September 4).

THE DRAGONS have gigs at **Chichester** College of Further Education (April 29), **Haverfordwest** R.A.F. Bawdy (30), **Tiverton** Motel (May 4), **Bristol** South Technical College (6), **Colchester** Essex University (7), **Blackpool** Arts College at Tiffany's (13), **Salisbury** Technical College (27) and **Bradford** University (28). More are being set.

TOM ROBINSON BAND play **Newport** Harper Adams College (April 29), **Hertford** Balls Park College (30), **London Hammersmith** Red Cow (May 4, 11 and 18), **London** Central Polytechnic (6), **London Camden** Dingwalls (9), **Bristol** Granary (21), **Aberdeen** University (27).

THE DRIFTERS have added another three gigs to their current British tour — at **Saltburn** Philmore Disco (this Saturday, **Gloucester** Leisure Centre (May 12) and **Derby** Bailey's (16) . . . **THE CHI-LITES** have added two more dates to their itinerary — at **Birmingham** La Dolce Vita (May 2) and **Blackburn** Cavendish (5).

SCORPIONS, one of Germany's leading heavy rock bands, undertake a short tour to promote their new RCA album "Virgin Killer". Dates are **Manchester** Electric Circus (tomorrow, Friday), **Wakefield** Technical College (Saturday), **Wigan** Casino (Sunday), **Burnley** Cats Whiskers (April 25), **Birmingham** Barbarella's (26), **London Kingsway** Sound Circus (27), **Middlesbrough** Rock Garden (29), **Bolton** Institute of Technology (30), **Sheffield** Top Rank (May 1), **Doncaster** Outlook (2) and **Brighton** Top Rank (3).

F.B.I. have upcoming dates at **London Camden** Music Machine (tonight, Thursday), **London** Marquee (May 6), **Colchester** Embassy Suite (8), **Portsmouth** Victory Club (19), **London Southgate** Royalty Ballroom (21), **Buckley** Tivoli (June 2), **Ebbw Vale** Leisure Centre (4), **Cambridge** Magdalene College (15), **London Cockfosters** Middlesex Polytechinc (25) and **Doncaster** Outlook (29).

MANCHESTER Oaks Hotel in Chorlton is, from next week, featuring mainly new-wave acts. Albion Music have taken over bookings for the venue, and first bands confirmed are **Slaughter and the Dogs** (April 26), **Slits** (28), **Little Bob Story** (May 3), **The Jam** (5) and **The Vibrators** (10).

HERON: promoting album

HERON go out on tour this weekend to promote their recently released Bronze album "Diamond Of Dreams". The band, fronted by Mike Heron, plays **Cleethorpes** Winter Gardens (tonight, Thursday), **Bedford** College of Education (Saturday), **London** Marquee (April 26), **Fife** St. Andrew's University (29), **Edinburgh** Tiffany's (May 2), **Oxford** Westminster College (6), **Folkestone** Leas Cliff Hall (7), **Birmingham** Barbarella's (13), **Bolton** Institute of Technology (14), **Hitchin** College (28), **Manchester** Electric Circus (June 17), **Dudley** J.B.'s (18), **Middlesbrough** Town Hall (19), **Plymouth** Woods Centre (23), **Bath** University (24), **Hertford** Balls Park College (25) and **Chester** Quaintways (27).

JOHNNY NASH plays cabaret engagements at **Stoke** Bailey's (June 9-11), **Leicester** Bailey's (13 week), **Watford** Bailey's (19 week) and **Luton** Cesar's (26 week). These will be his only British gigs, apart from a possible **London** concert.

Edited: Derek Johnson

Hot Rods mini-tour

EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS headline a short six-concert tour in early June, culminating in a major London gig. Dates are Birmingham Town Hall (June 2), Manchester Ardwick Apollo (3), Glasgow Apollo (4), Newcastle City Hall (5), Bristol Colston Hall (8) and London Rainbow (9).

Ticket prices are £1.75, £1.50 and £1 at Birmingham and Manchester; £1.75, £1.50, £1.25 and £1 at Glasgow and Newcastle; £1.75, £1.50, £1.25, £1 and 75p at Bristol; and £2.50, £2 and £1.50 at the Rainbow. Promoters Alec Leslie Entertainments have still to confirm the support act.

JENNY HAAN

Lion roar round U.K.

JENNY HAAN'S LION set out this weekend on their first major tour since Jenny formed the band last year soon after leaving Babe Ruth. So far 23 gigs have been confirmed, and more are being finalised.

The date sheet is:

Burton 76 Club (tomorrow, Friday), **Dudley** J.B.'s (Saturday), **London Camden** Music Machine (April 25), **Scunthorpe** Tiffany's (26), **Bradford** University (27), **Wolverhampton** Layfayette (29), **Ilkley** College of Education (30), **Leeds** Fforde Green Hotel (May 1), **Barrow** Maxim's (5), **Scarborough** Penthouse (6), **Northampton** County Ground (7), **Brighton** Top Rank (10), **London** Marquee (11), **Portsmouth** Centre Hotel (12), **Bracknell** South Hill Park (13), **Folkestone** Leas Cliff Hall (14), **Chester** Quaintways (16), **Leicester** De Montfort Hall (19), **Aberdeen** University (20), **Darlington** Incognito (25), **Birkenhead** Mr. Digby's (26), **Manchester** Electric Circus (28), **Birmingham** Barbarella's (31).

Fogelberg nixes

DAN FOGELBERG will not now be the support act on The Eagles' eight-concert British tour, opening at Wembley next week. He's cancelled his visit at short notice, and the reson is unknown. New support act is girl singer Val Carter whose album "Just A Stone's Throw Away", co-produced by Lowell George, was released recently by CBS.

GABRIEL LONDON EXTRA

PETER GABRIEL is to play two more London concerts — because his three previously-reported shows at Hammersmith Odeon next week (April 24-26) have now sold out. The extra performances are both on Saturday, April 30, at the New Victoria Theatre (6 and 9 pm). Tickets priced £3.50, £3 and £2.50 are on sale now at the box-office or by post, though mail order applicants may be disappointed if there is a rush of personal callers.

Last-minute Clapton gig

ERIC CLAPTON has added an extra date to his current British tour, supported by Ronnie Lane's Slim Chance. It's at Hanley Victoria Hall tomorrow (Friday) at 7.30 pm, with all tickets priced £2.50. The package also plays two nights at Dublin National Stadium, on June 4 and 6 (tickets £4, £3.25 and £2.50).

Mr. Big gigs

MR. BIG, just back from their debut U.S. tour, begin their first major British headlining tour next weekend. The follow-up to their hit single "Romeo" is released by EMI on May 9, titled "Feel Like Calling Home". More dates are still being finalised, taking them through to mid-June, but those confirmed so far are:

Cromer West Runton Pavilion (April 30), Maidenhead Skindles (May 1), Cardiff Top Rank (3), Plymouth Castaways (4), Salford University (6), Hastings Pier Pavilion (7), Croydon Greyhound (8), Yeovil Johnson Hall (10), Withernsea Grand Pavilion (13), Southend Cliffs Pavilion (14), Morecambe Winter Gardens (15), Blackburn King George's Hall (16), Hemel Hempstead Pavilion (18), London Kingsway Sound Circus (21), Chelmsford Chancellor Hall (27), Bury St. Edmunds Corn Exchange (28), Sheffield Top Rank (29) and Birmingham venue to be announced (30).

Gorillas split

THE GORILLAS, until recently the "bright hopes" of Chiswick Records, have broken up. They have been off the road for more than a month because Jesse Hector was suffering from nervous exhaustion.

A spokesman said the split was "basically due to irreconcilable differences" between Hector and the rest of the band, who were formerly known as the Hammersmith Gorillas.

Thunder heartbreak

JOHNNY THUNDER and the Heartbreakers were forced to cancel the first four gigs in their lengthy British tour, reported last week, because Thunder was suffering from a throat infection. The tour now opens at Hastings Pier Pavilion this Saturday (23), and the cancelled shows — at Halesowen, Kidderminster, Derby and Birmingham — will be re-scheduled for later in the itinerary. Meanwhile three more gigs have been added to the June leg of the tour — at St. Alban's City Hall (13), Birmingham Barbarella's (14) and Plymouth Fiesta (19).

RECORD NEWS

● Charly Records are launching a new label, Affinity, devoted mainly to contemporary and jazz product. First album releases at the end of April are a solo set by Gallagher & Lyle saxist **Jimmy Jewell** titled "I'm Amazed", and French band **Sirel & Co.** — featuring former Stones guitarist **Mick Taylor** — with "Sirkel". Future albums include previously unreleased material by **Duke Ellington** and **John Coltrane.**

● Issued on April 29 by Bronze is the **Heron** single "Do It Yourself" — a specially edited track from their debut album "Diamond Of Dreams".

● **Bruce Johnston's** first CBS solo album, "Going Public", is scheduled for May 6 release.

● MCA release the "Best Of Car Wash" album on May 6 to coincide with the film's British premiere in early June. It features highlights from the original double soundtrack LP, written and produced by Norman Whitfield and performed by **Rose Royce.**

● Due out in early May on the Charly label is **Crazy Caven 'n' the Rhythm Rockers'** album **"Our Way Of Rockin'"** which includes their current single "My Little Sister's Gotta Motorbike". They will be touring extensively to promote it.

● Continuing the string of solo albums by Moody Blues members, **Graeme Edge** has his latest set, "Paradise Ballroom", issued by Decca next month.

● Produced by Barry Blue, **Moon** are now finalising their new single (May release by CBS) and album (June). They will be touring here in June and July as support to a big-name US act.

● Lemmy's **Motorhead** have left Stiff label and signed with Chiswick. they are at present recording a single with producer Speedy Keen, to be followed by a live album.

● The first new single for eight years by **Herb Reed and the Original Platters** is issued this month on the PVK label, distributed by President. It is the former Elvis Presley and Andy Williams hit "Can't Help Falling In Love". The group visit Britain in May to record an album and make a few live appearances.

● Punk rocker **Johnny Moped** has signed with Chiswick, who release his single "Incendiary Device"/"No One" next month.

THE JAM's debut album "In The City" will be released by Polydor on May 13. Of the 12 tracks, ten are original compositions by guitarist Paul Weller, and the title track is issued as a single tomorrow (Friday).

The band are currently rehearsing new material and a stage act, and next week they film a sequence for inclusion in a movie about the New Wave for British distribution in the summer.

GEORGE BENSON: FOUR CONCERTS

GEORGE BENSON, whose album "In Flight" has gone gold in the U.S., flies into Britain next month for four concerts. These will be his first appearances here, apart from a saeson at London Ronnie Scott's Club in 1975. He plays:

- **Glasgow Apollo, May 25 at 7.30 pm. Tickets go on sale tomorrow (Friday) priced £2.50, £2 and £1.50.**
- **Manchester Palace, May 27 at 7.30. Tickets £2.80, £2.20 and £1.75 on sale now.**
- **Birmingham Odeon, May 28 at 7.30. Tickets £2.80, £2.20 and £1.75, on sale from April 29.**
- **London Royal Albert Hall, May 30 at 8 pm. Tickets £3.50, £3, £2.50, £2 and £1, on sale from April 30.**

Local commercial radio stations are co-promoting with overall promoter Harvey Goldsmith, and are recording all four shows for subsequent broadcast in their areas.

Extra McTell

RALPH McTELL has added two dates to his British concert tour, reported two weeks ago — at Canterbury Odeon (May 13) and Stratford-on-Avon Royal Shakespeare Theatre (15).

Harcourt's Heroes: Lindisfarne Mk.III?

FORMER Lindisfarne co-leader Ray Jackson has formed a new band with Charlie Harcourt (from Lindisfarne Mk.II), called Harcourt's Heroes. For some months they have been working in the North East to capacity houses. Plans are now being made for them to headline a nationwide tour in early summer.

Full line-up is Jackson (lead vocals, harmonica), Harcourt (guitars, vocal, piano), Martin Craggs (tenor sax, congas, vocal), Colin Mason (drums), Les Dodds (guitar) and Barry Spence (bass, vocal).

The band are not seeking a record deal at present, but will be backing Ray Jackson when he records another solo album for EMI next month.

Renwick finally quits

GUITARIST Tim Renwick has finally decided to leave the Sutherland Brothers and Quiver after two weeks of uncertainty.

CBS issued a statement last week saying he had quit and was looking for a singer-composer with whom to form a partnership for recording and live work.

Then 24 hours later, CBS withdrew their statement, hoping that Renwick could be persuaded to change his mind.

But that did not happen, and the Sutherlands are looking for a replacement.

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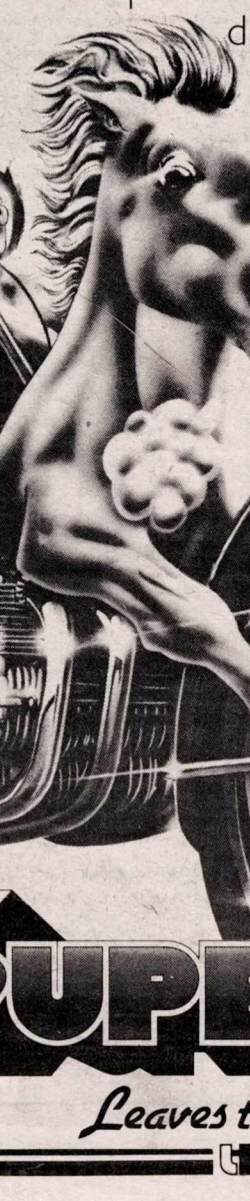

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"They're Erudite, Intelligent – just a little pretentious". *Mick Brown – Sounds*

"I suppose we'll have to call them 'Superior Punks' until we get some new labels printed". *Tony Mitchell – Sounds*

"The Stranglers are colourfully outrageous and their music is amazing". *Bob Hart – The Sun*

"All the punk poise of the original Electric Prunes, the acid ingenuity of the early Doors tempered with the dark gothic horror of Lou Reed's Velvet Underground". *John Collis – Time Out*

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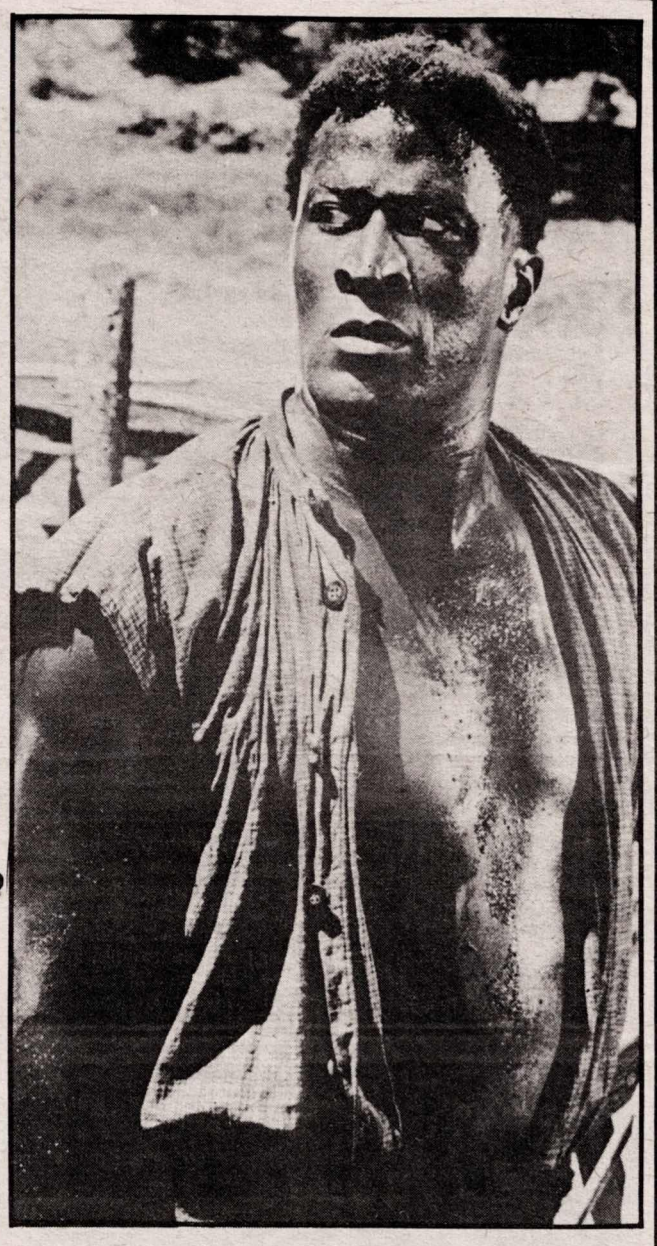


Do you remember the days of slavery?

Dug and re-dug by CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY

ROOTS IS A media event of massive proportions. It's this year's *Jaws;* it dwarfs *King Kong* — also, coincidentally, a tale of how a bunch of greedy and callous white folks brought something beyond their understanding from Africa to America — and blows *A Star Is Born* clear into the next county.

It's a tailor-made hook for cartoons in the *Evening Standard* (black worker at a Rootes factory shaking his chained hands in anguish while a stern and sardonic foreman deadpans, "A magnificent performance, Toby, but I'm afraid we can't raise your wages," or words to that effect), always a clear indicator of the existence of a new national shibboleth.

Roots has done for the noble science of geneology what *The Exorcist* did for Catholicism. All over America, people of all races and from all the different national origins have been spurred by Alex Haley's best-selling work of "faction" — or plain old "hitorical novel", if you prefer — and the TV adaptation thereof to trace their family history back into the various Old Countries to learn more about where they came from and, by extension, who they are.

It also spurred black high-school kids in the States to beat the living shit out of their white classmates under the banner of the slogan "Roots!" — the sins of the fathers indeed.

Roots, then, is America's current national obsession.

The book and teleplay that were the end results of the investment of $150,000 of Alex Haley's money and twelve years of his life touched America with two genuine fundamentals. The horrific scale and depth of that country's crimes against the ancestors of its present-day black population was certainly the most immediate and the most obvious, but the second and subtler attraction of *Roots* was that virtually the entire population of Americ a consists of the dispossessed of a variety of nations and cultures.

THE AFRICANS weren't even the only ones who'd come against their will. Many had come from various parts of the British Isles because they'd been "condemned to transportation" — deported to America or Australia as an alternative to lengthy prison sentences.

But even those who came voluntarily over the years had come to strike out afresh, to seek in the "New World" the freedom and opportunities that they'd been denied in their homelands. Irish, Italians, Germans, Poles, Hungarians, Scandinavians, all uprooted and relocated.

In the most vicious irony of all, the American citizens whose forcible alienation from their culture and traditions was second only to the blacks were the native Americans — the so-called "Red Indians". A brave people whose only crime was to lose a war, they are the most shocking proof of the maxim that the victors in any conflict are always the ones who get to write the history books.

Now, in the wake of *Roots,* Marlon Brando — a longtime spokesman for the Native American cause — is preparing a similar television marathon to tell their story.

What *Roots* has done in eight hours of television and nearly seven hundred pages of print is to tell the story of Haley's family from the birth of his ancestor Kunta Kinte in 1751 through to the birth of Haley himself some 170 years later.

Kunta Kinte himself — "dat crazy Aff'ican" as he is continually referred to — has become instant black folklore, a black culture hero following in the footsteps of such mythical heroes as Stagolee and John Henry and such present-day martyr-heroes as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X — both of whom, incidentally, were interviewed by Haley for *Playboy* during the '60s.

Roots has opened many old wounds in America, but the effects have been by no means ill.

It has exploded that polite fiction that the books were closed on the awful events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The old wounds had healed crookedly, gangrenously; a deception, a surface healing only.

Despite its Hollywood gloss and its conformity to the generally lame and shitty values of American TV, *Roots* has brought it all — like the man said — back home. White and black Americans alike have had to reassess and reconsider, to decide whether the old debts really are cancelled after all.

And maybe the old wounds can heal cleanly this time.

ROOTS HAS BEEN attacked on many levels for many reasons.

Time magazine, still a primary cultural, social and political arbiter for much of Middle America, gave the book a solid thumbs-up but put the TV adaptation down as *"Mandingo* for middlebrows."

A *Sunday Times* writer has punched a few large holes in the accuracy of Haley's research into the African portions of his tale: next week's *Sunday Times* will carry the author's reply.

The Ku Klux Klan has described it — are you ready for this? — as "pernicious and inaccurate."

In a rather ill-advised statement, Haley has suggested that his critics are apologists for slavery, which played him right into the hands of people like the jerk on *What The Papers Say,* who seemed to take a real delight in putting down the uppity nigra who thought that he knew more about history than his betters.

Still, I trust that I am doing no disservice to Mr Haley by suggesting that the people who are responding to *Roots* in either its televised or literary incarnations are responding more to his story and the implications of that story than to the manner in which it is told, since his prose verges on the pedestrian and his characters are archetypes — maybe even stereotypes — both more and less than human, simultaneously larger than life and hollower.

Still, Kunta Kinte and Chicken George and the rest of the characters from the last seven generations of Haley's family are as real to the American viewing public now as Kojak and Starsky and Mr Spock and Batman.

ALEX HALEY doesn't really look like anybody's idea of the man who has struck the greatest and most telling blow for black pride and identity since the days of blazing '60s rhetoric.

A plump and rumpled man in a cream-coloured summer-weight suit, he is slumped on the sofa in his suite in the Inn On The Park while a querulous and bespectacled man from *Newsweek* interrogates him. The room is strewn with the debris of a day of interviews.

Haley has just returned from the London studio of America's ABC television network, where he has delivered a hastily arranged interview to rebut the *Sunday Times* allegations. He's also done the same for CBS and NBC, which is why the day's interview schedule has been shot to pieces, leaving me and *Newsweek* and the *Irish Times* as each other's unwilling kibitzers.

". . . *Roots* has had some critical questioning from scholars," Haley explains in his mellifluous, urbane baritone, "which I have welcomed and learned from." He sounds exhausted.

"I'll give you an example. One of the most probing criticisms was made by Dr Willie Lee Rose of John Hopkins University, and she is a highly trained Africanist . . ."

Newsweek interrupts him. "Look, is there any way we can do this without . . . ?" He gestures contemptuously at me and the *Irish Times.*

"I'm from a national Irish paper," pipes up the latter, "and I'm not really interested in this."

"We don't come out until next week," says *Newsweek,* "and if he writes something that comes out before we appear then I'm in a lotta trouble. If you're talking to someone exclusive *it's gotta be exclusive!"*

Haley apologises to me and Irish and leads *Newsweek* off into the bedroom to wrap it up.

It's all work. Haley's casual reading matter includes such relaxing tomes as J. M. Grey's *History Of The Gambia* and David Henige's *A Chronology Of The Oral Tradition.*

As is appropriate for his new role as A Spokesman For His People, Haley is an intriguing balance of Square and Hip.

His hip credentials include his trailblazing interviews with such figures as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X (the latter interview led to his ghostwriting / collaborating on *The Autobiography Of Malcolm X*) and Miles Davis, all of which appeared in *Playboy* (a magazine which itself represents an archetypal Square / Hip truce).

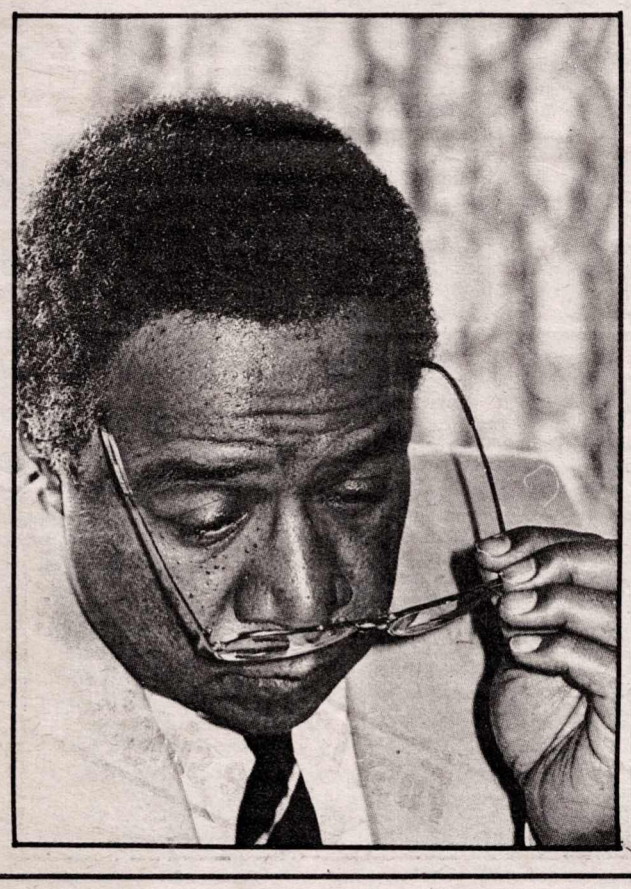
His Square credits include considerable amounts of work for *Readers Digest,* America's ultimate Square magazine, which financed much of his African research.

His clothes and haircut are totally Square. His glasses are Hip.

His standard biography incorporates all of these facets,

■ *Continues over*

Above: What a Kunta he turned out to be . . .



Left: ALEX HALEY

Pictures: CHALKIE DAVIES

■ *From previous page*

all the way from Malcolm X through *Playboy* to *Readers Digest.* One of the things it doesn't mention is that he wrote the screenplay for *Superfly TNT,* the sequel to the original *Superfly* movie. He did it in ten days flat in order to raise money to keep *Roots* going.

Understandably, he's not boasting about it, but it was necessary. By the time he'd finished writing *Roots* he was $100,000 in debt.

HALEY USHERS *Newsweek* and his vital exclusive out of the door and settles back down on the sofa, lighting another menthol cigarette. I ask him if he wishes he could clone himself.

"I wish there were three of me," he says. "One of them I would chain to a typewriter, one I'd send out to do the public relations and the other I'd leave to live a life of ease and luxury . . . you wanna write something for your Irish readers?" he asks Irish.

"On the other side of my family, my father's mother was the daughter of her master, and *his* father had come from County Monaghan in 1799."

Haley has blown Irish's mind completely. He just can't handle that one at all and starts to practically froth at the moustache.

"To understate," continues Haley, "it startled me no end. I couldn't feel Irish to save my soul." He grins at Irish. "We could be cousins."

"When you're talking about black people in the United States — *so-called black people* — genetically, the U.S. black people are some part African, some part European of one or another ethnic strain, and many of us are some part American Indian."

"And of course, you're talking *culturally* as well as *genetically,"* I interpose.

"For sure. Without black people, American music would be totally different. You wouldn't have Bo Diddley. You wouldn't've had the same beat. That's why Presley got so big. He was a colourful white star with a black sound."

"Y'ever notice how Presley's first hit sounds like Muddy Waters' first hit?"

"Was that 'Hound Dog'? No? I'm afraid I don't know our music as well as you."

"How come no-one wrote something like *Roots* before?" asks Irish.

Haley grins. *"I* don't know," he replies. "I imagine there's a lot of people wondering that."

"And a lot of people *wishing* they had," I say.

"That's *right.* You know what I'd like to see happen? I'd like to see a writer from each

"When you grow up, you gon' write a BEST-SELLER!"

ethnic group represented in the United States take a family — maybe another family if not his own — and take it over that same generational span. I think it would be fascinating for all peoples to know more about other peoples ..."

MANY PEOPLE, on the other hand, *do* know their family history yea unto the seventh generation, and find that it weighs heavy upon them — find that the serried ranks of ancestral ghosts stretching back into infinity behind them is more of an inhibition than anything else.

Not knowing "who you are" in the historical sense leaves you free to create an identity that's you and no-one else ... though sometimes that could get lonely. Witness the recent upsurge — in the wake of the new laws — of adoptees frenetically searching for their "real", "original", "natural" parents.

In a TV documentary on the subject, many of them used the word "roots" to explain why they had sought out their parents after thirty or forty years, and in one wrenching filmed sequence, middle-aged daughter and elderly mother met for the first time and — tragically but not unexpectedly — had absolutely nothing to say to each other.

Still, rejecting one's roots is a privilege granted only to those who have roots to reject. Once you know, you can decide to what extent you wish to identify with the past, to what extent you wish to be part of the tradition — or if you want nothing at all to do with it.

But if it's all a mystery, then you don't even have the option; you can't even *choose* to reject it. All you can do is reject the opportunity to pursue it, and to take as your roots those of the adoptive parents.

But here the analogy breaks down: every black American — and, let us not forget, no small number of West Indian blacks also — were kidnapped, torn by force and force alone from their homes and families.

Africa certainly never rejected them; Africa mourned them.

But they are Africans no longer; Alex Haley is no more an African than I am a Hungarian, even though my distancing from my parents' homeland is only one generation to his seven.

My parents left Central Europe to escape Hitler. If it hadn't been for the Nazis, I might still be a Hungarian; maybe the difference is not so profound after all.

"I'VE MADE so much out of this I'm almost embarrassed to tell you."

In the back of a taxi heading for the studios of BBC Radio London, Haley is answering a question from Irish about his finances.

"I get about a dollar eighty-seven a copy, and if you multiply that ... I've made about three million dollars." He looks over at me. "Almost as much as a rock star."

"You were quite well off before the book came out, weren't you?" queries Irish. Haley looks at him derisively.

"Are you kiddin'? I was quite well off before I started *writing* the book. By the time I got into all the expenses and prerequisites I owed over a hundred thousand dollars and I had about two hundred in cash."

By the time Haley finally delivered the manuscript to Doubleday, his U.S. publishers, he was more than four years over his final deadline, overdue to the point that he had to insert the last two hundred pages into the book at galley-proof stage, an unheard-of last resort that had his editors fuming and the printers tearing their hair out.

The only reason that Doubleday didn't bill him for the cost of the massive amounts of additional typesetting thus required was that they would have had to pay him an additional advance for him to have been able to pay *them.*

He still maintains that the book contains factual errors — for instance, in one of the early chapters he gets a male goat pregnant — which he could have corrected if he'd had another three months of research.

However, he didn't have those three months. If he'd procrastinated any longer, Doubleday and the taxman would probably have clubbed together with all the other people to whom he owed money and lynched him.

Anyway, the book came out and became the fastest-selling hardback book in the history of American publishing, was rushed straight into TV production and took Haley with it to folk-hero status.

Now everybody wants a piece of Alex Haley.

AT RADIO London he receives a delegation from the Gambian High Commission, and does two interviews on the trot.

The first is for the *Home Run* show, in which a glacial female interviewer (white) asks him the same questions that everybody else does and receives pretty much the same answers, parts of which also crop up word for word in the *Playboy* interview (which, by the way, was conducted by Murray Fisher, who was his editor when *he* was interviewing for *Playboy* and who also acted as his editor for *Roots),* and on the double-album recorded on one of his lecture tours by Warner Brothers.

The second interview was for the *Black London* show.

The show's compere and the half-dozen black Londoners who joined the panel couldn't have treated Haley with more respect and reverence if he'd been Bob Marley, Muhammad Ali, Marcus Garvey and Martin Luther King rolled into one. It wasn't merely Haley's extraordinary feat of dedication and research or even his skills as a writer that they were responding to.

It was what he'd done for their individual and collective self-image. He'd depicted an Africa that wasn't inhabited by savages and primitives, and a captive black America that didn't consist of chortling, water-melon chomping morons.

He'd delivered a counter-blow to the centuries of humiliating propaganda that had made the 20th century black American ashamed of his ancestors and his race. More than any of the dashiki'd neo-Africanists of the '60s. Haley had worked towards laying those crippling, humiliating stereotypes to rest.

Bye bye, Stepin Fetchit. Later for you, Crow Jim. Rest in pieces, Black and White Minstrel Show.

Just like Taj Mahal said it at the turn of the decade, "Ain't Gwine Whistle Dixie Any Mo'."

Sure, the TV series is — in Hayley's own phrase — "cosmetized." Sure, Haley's own narrative style is less than dazzling. Sure, there are probably gaps in his research despite all those years of travelling and detective work.

But somebody needed to tell that story in terms that everybody can relate to.

And, finally, Kunta Kinte, torn from his home and his family and carried away in chains, is more than just the archetype of the uprooted black American. Kunta Kinte is everyone caught helplessly in the unfeeling and uncaring grip of a society whose priorities and needs have little to do with the priorities and needs of those who suffer to keep the machine rolling.

Because, when it comes right down to it, there is no dishonour in losing a war, but there is much dishonour in having raped millions of lives, is having committed a crime of such magnitude against innocents, in having done such an incredible amount of damage to others.

ONE MORE thing. If anybody reading this has found himself asking what any of this has got to do with music, just think on James Brown's triumphant shout of "Say It Loud, I'm Black And I'm Proud!"

Think on Burning Spear's brooding chant of "Do you remember the days of slavery?"

Think on the Staple Singers' "Respect Yourself."

Think on the chilling finale of Richard Pryor's "Bicentennial Nigger" album.

Think on what Randy Newman was *really* writing about in "Let's Burn Down The Cornfield."

And think on B.B. King's "Why I Sing The Blues."

"When I first got the blues they brought me over on a ship,
Men was standing over me and a lot more with a whip,
Now everybody wanna know why I'm singin' the blues,
Yes, I've been around a long time, people,
I've really paid my dues ..."

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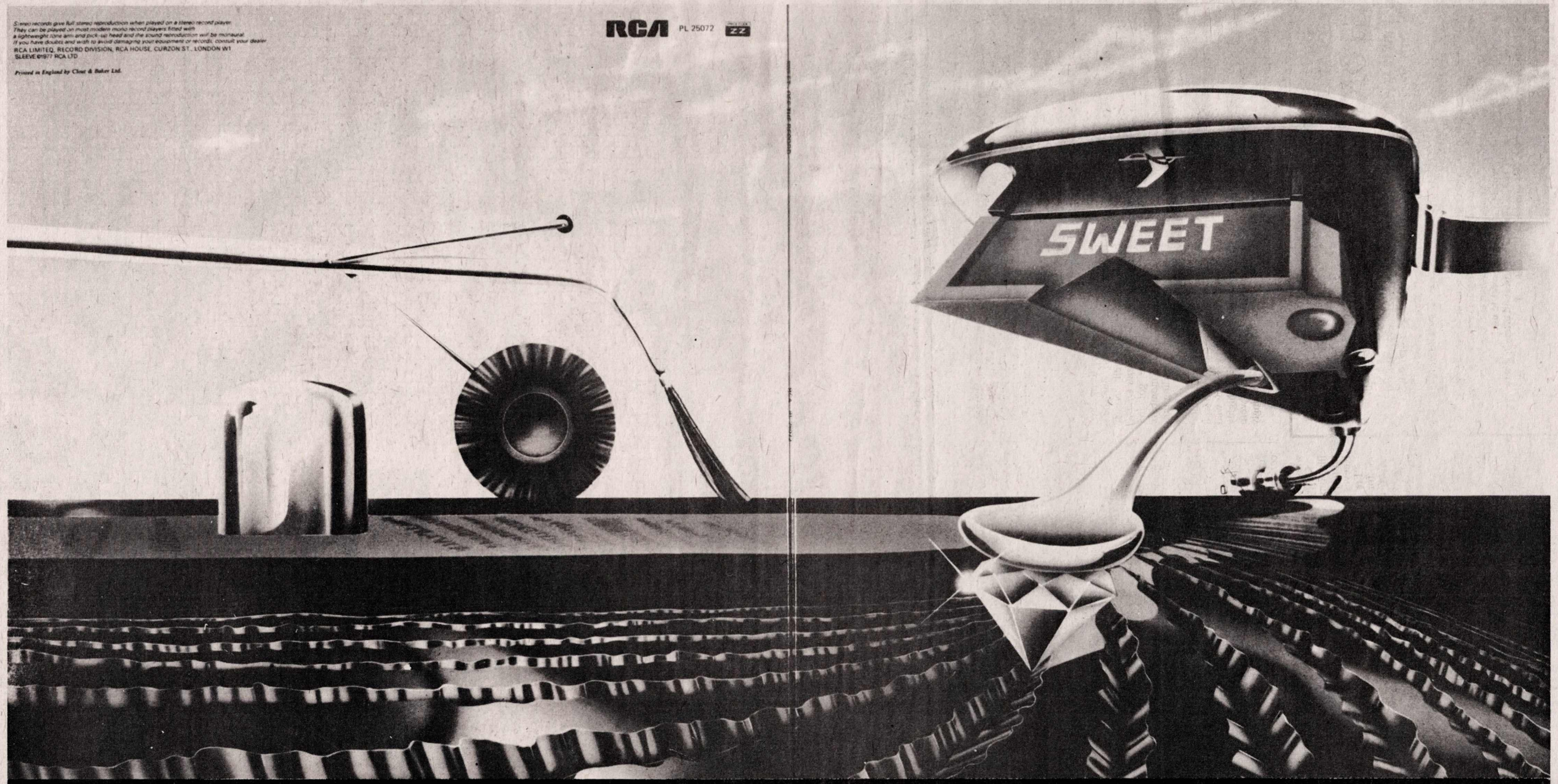

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THRILLS

WOULD YOU LET YOUR DAUGHTER DATE THIS MAN?

"THEY THINK they know the real Jim Reeves from a bit of wax. This 'Gentleman Jim' bit that suddenly came about — the perfect gentleman — he wasn't like this at all."

It's now nearly 13 years since the Reaper claimed Jim Reeves for his own, thus eliminating the possiblitily of any more classics like "But You Love Me Daddy" (cries of 'Shame!'), but his legend is still very much with us.

A recent TV promoted double album sold a staggering 800,000 copies, outdoing even Bert Weedon! And April 3-9 was, in case you missed it, Jim Reeves Week with the intriguing prospect of a fan club get together. So it was that somewhat against my better judgement, I came to be in t'Majestic Hotel in mysterious Harrogate on April 6.

Jeez, I thought, all these people just living for Jim Reeves — you know, real *freaks!* A quick glance around the room showed some 80 people from all over the country, sexes equally divided, average age forty. They all fitted nicely into the mould created by the story of the Irish home with three pictures on the mantelpiece — one of the Pope, one of John F. Kennedy, and one of Jim Reeves.

But no freaks.

Well, there is *one,* who's bonkers to the extent of claiming that her son was fathered by Jim Reeves, using her husband as an intermediary. But she's not here and is already well enough looked after by the likes of *News Of The World* and *Nationwide*. One got the impression that many fan club members wished she would join her darling Jim with the Reaper.

So, no freaks and no wild eyed statements like "Jim Reeves is alive and well in Harrogate!"What we did have was wall to wall sincerity. Some were highly articulate, others weren't, but all were uncritically adoring. almost unnervingly so.

Excuse me, madam, but what is it about Jim Reeves that's brought you here? "Well, it's the gentleness, the kindness, the comfort in his voice. It's soothing, innit?"

So it went on.

"He's so relaxing. Everything seems to go away. His voice hypnotises you."

Time and again you got, "He's so sincere. It's like he's singing just to me."

Yes, but what brings you here to Harrogate? "Well, it's a tribute. It brings you nearer." Nearer, my Jim, to thee.

Some have taken this aura a step further.

"There was never a scandal attached to the man. It's all clean fun. He was a straight man!" was one man's declaration. That's all he knows. Or rather, it's all he wants to know. Come in David Bussey, fan club secretary, who also provided the opening quote:

"The tragedy of it is that the fans have built up a Jim Reeves purely from a piece of wax and they really don't want to know anything else."

You mean there's more than meets the eye?

THERE CERTAINLY is. David Bussey, far from being a glassy eyed fanatic, is a level-headed and open-minded man on Reeves, with an encyclopaedic authority. We begin to build up a picture of a man who liked his Jack Daniels and his women and who was generally well into honkytonking. Well, well!

But just as this gets interesting, David breaks off. "The other side of his character is better left unsaid. The fans don't want to hear it. To them, Reeves is something else. How do you tell the truth without upsetting people? I wouldn't want to do that because it's not for me to do it."

And so the legend is safe for a few years yet.

Looking back on the fans, one wonders if they could handle the aura being broken, as along comes Mary — Mary Reeves, that is, over for her annual visit to Wembley.

Mary is a wary Southern businesswoman who answers your questions with a mixture of caution and what she thinks you want to hear. She doesn't actually say our policemen are wonderful but I'm sure she thinks it.

Mary has clearly become a surrogate for the real thing in the eyes of the Reeves fans; out come the tape recorders and cine cameras.

She commands the sort of devotion usually reserved for royalty or Lena Zavaroni. Why, some members even make the supreme sacrifice of getting up at 6.30 am to see her off! Mary is clearly not going to break the aura on which her income depends.

Evidently sudden death when more is expected of you has certain advantages, even if it does rather limit your ability to enjoy them.

In this respect, Reeves, of course, is not alone — James Dean, Buddy Holly, Jimi Hendrix and all, enshrined rather than entombed. Their legends are intact and free from mistakes, decline and old age. The image and the music are sanctified.

"Again we're back to this aura. It's a fascination in an unknown entity. Nobody will ever know, really. Because the longer we go on, the less people will remember what actually happened," continues David.

And so the aura continues unbroken while the cash registers ring merrily.

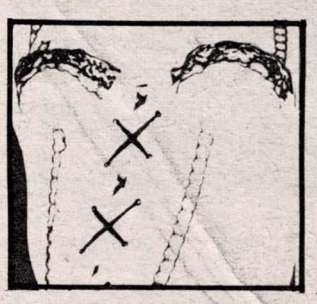
David Bussey is, however, under no illusions as to his position as an unofficial, unthanked promotional tool for Jim Reeves' music.

"I'm not bitter becuase I don't do the job for fame. I just look at everything in terms of achieving something. What we've got to do is make sure the name of Jim Reeves is perpetuated through the only tool we've got: his music.

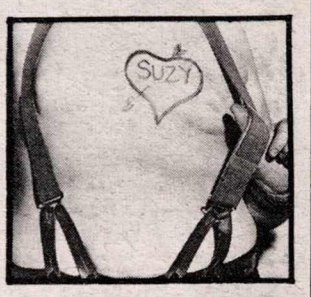
"At the end of the day, if it sets people talking about Jim Reeves in a critical sort of way then we've achieved something. The fact that a lot of people don't like Jim Reeves doesn't bother me. The fact that they *know* about him — that's fine."

David is a great believer in people drawing their own conclusion. So you draw yours. Mine? It's his world and he's welcome to it.

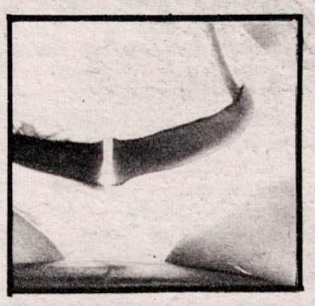
□ IAN CRANNA



CHERIE CURRY, 17, VOCALS & PIANO

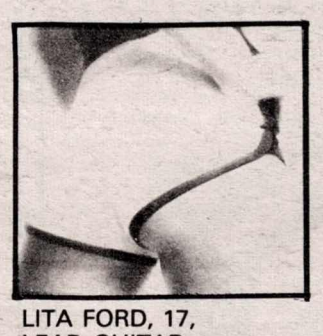


LITTLE BOB (STORY) PIAZZA, 80, VOCALS



JACKIE FOX, 16, BASS & VOCALS

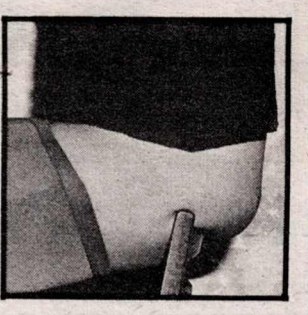
DOMINIQUE LELAN, 76, BASS



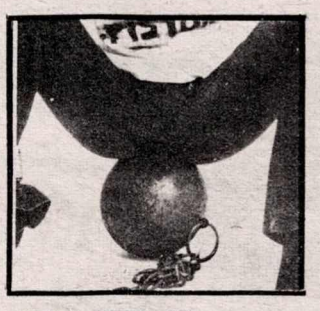
LITA FORD, 17, LEAD GUITAR

GUY GEORGE CREMY, 7, LEAD GUITAR

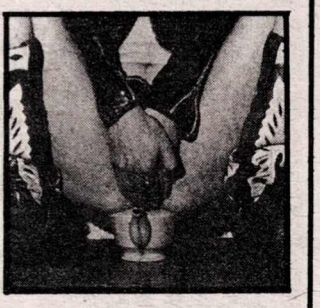
SANDY WEST, 16, DRUMS & VOCALS



DOMINIQUE QUERTIER, 112, DRUMS



JOAN JETT, 17 RHYTHM GUITAR & VOCALS



DOMINIQUE GUILON, 62, RHYTHM GUITAR

". . . these five Continental drongettes brought the audience down with some cold, damp, twitching rock and roll, and the fact that they are old and extremely degenerate middle-aged men was a bummer.
"And what a bummer!" —
DEPRAVED JOE MAGGOTT, NME
(Recognise the faces?)

DAMNED ASSAULT STONES MERINGUES

NEW WAVE INVADES Stateside and coyly holds hands with Old Farts, Shock Horror Outrage: When The Damned checked their rancid hides into Noo Yawk City for their three-date Easter residency at CBGBs, they found themselves on the receiving end of a whole parcel of goodies from The Rolling Stones.

To be precise . . . seven lemon meringue pies, a birthday cake and other slapstick paraphernalia — plus a trio of nubile Yankee hookers and a telegram of best wishes and goodwill from Mick 'n' Keef 'n' Co. to Rat, The Cap, Brian and The Vamp.

The Toast Of U.K. Punkdom immediately put their presents to use.

They hurled the hookers at their CBGB audience and unwound after the gig by screwing the lemon meringue pies. (Or something like that . . .)

□ H. B. GANGRENE

(See also gig review, On The Town)

THAT'S IT FOR WESTERN CIVILISATION*

RICHARD THOMPSON, mainstay of Fairport Convention up to and including "Full House", writer of fine spine-chilling songs, possessor of hauntingly effective voice and an unequivocally English talent.

His first solo outing was the underrated and inexplicably deleted "Henry The Human Fly", which, apart from cropping up as a guest on various albums in the Fairport orbit, was all that was heard of him until he surfaced with his wife Linda to critical and commercial success with a series of three excellent albums.

Since the last of those — "Pour Down Like Silver" in late 1975 — there's come to light a live Fairport album, amply demonstrating Thompson's unique guitar style, and a sort of legitimate bootleg, the double "Guitar/Vocal" evincing Thompson's cult appeal. It's a pretty impressive track record, but when he was interviewed at Island last week, Thompson seemed determined to keep the past firmly in its chronological place.

"Music's a very transient thing, very much of the moment or of the time, and looking back I don't find them very interesting records. It's difficult for me to retain any enthusiasm for things I wrote then. I was expressing something of that time and there's nothing I can do about them now, that's a million miles away.

"I never listen to my old records now, even the albums with Linda were just left-overs from old albums, we were just finishing up old material . . . I'm writing songs now that aren't caught up in that direct emotion.

"I'm just collating other peoples' ideas and putting them into a digestible form, the music isn't from me".

Thompson's always kept the rock business firmly at arm's length, but now he sees himself as a writer channelling other peoples ideas, minimising his role as a creative writer, simply soaking up influences like a sponge..

There's talk of putting a bibliography on the sleeve of the next album "so that people could go to the source, which avoids it being a magic process whereby the person with the knowledge witholds it from the other people and there's no transmission of how it's done".

It frightens him that people might buy an album simply because it's Richard Thompson and shrugged off the suggestion that he has a cult following.

"It's nice that people are interested in the music but it's something I would try and be detached from. The danger is that people's interest is in you rather than what comes out of you.

"The name describes the product." He smiled. "That's a terrible music business word, it's sitting here in Island Records that does it" — you can see why, they've got gold records on the walls like other people have china ducks!

I asked if "Pour Down Like Silver" could be seen as a deliberate step away from earlier albums, with its honed-down production and sparse backing.

"It came out like that because I couldn't find the musicians, they just weren't available . . . . I'm very enthusiastic about music at the moment. I don't feel *addicted* to music — I used to, it used to be a *drug* to me — but now I play because it's enjoyable.

"We didn't make albums in the past because we didn't want to — and now we really *want* to play".

Which explains the month on the road, with a gig at Drury Lane on May 1, with a nod in the direction of his old songs "as a reference".

Thompson was reticent about the musicians he'd have with him. "Do you mind if I do a Don Revie and not disclose the line-up before the kick-off"?

But yes, he said, Linda would certainly be appearing with him. It's also why he did a couple of days of 'Meet the Press', which he finds difficult, but does to hopefully interest people in the music.

He and Linda are due into the studios in May to start recording the new album, for which half a dozen songs are ready, which he'll be previewing on the tour as an appetiser for the album which he hopes will be ready for September release.

Of the current rock scene he said he listened to and enjoyed The Eagles and Fleetwood Mac and asserted his enthusiasm for the new wave bands.

"There's the total nihilism of the punk lads. Even though they don't have a solution, it's better than the nostalgia-cum-decadent side which is an imitation of the parents.

"It's more important to be dissatisfied . . . . I should think people crave any alternative to Margaret Thatcher."

PATRICK HUMPHRIES

Left: RICHARD THOMPSON harangues huge crowds in Hammersmith . . .

**Courtesy of Headlines That Have Nothing To Do With Articles Inc.*

In fact I'm a bit of a threat to society on the quiet.

MACHINES TAKE OVER!

—Frankfurt Electrofnurgarama—

THE ELECTRONIC MUSIC explosion, which began several years ago with the introduction of the Moog synthesizer, is coming of age.

Evidence for this was provided at the International Spring Fair held in Frankfurt recently where all manner of second and third generation electronic hardware was on display.

When the Moog began it was only possible to play one note at a time. Things have progressed fast however and, at the Fair, Moog proudly displayed their latest model the Polymoog, a synthesiser keyboard which for the first time allows you to play chords — but even this was overshadowed by a device which would not have been out of place in *Forbidden Planet.*

It's called the Symphonic Orchestra Theatre Console and is played like an organ. The magic of it is that by pushing the proper keys you can get — (deep breath) — the golden harp, percussion with eight voices, symphonic wow *(Far Out. — Ed)* 15 upper keyboard voices, flute chorus, orchestral symphonizer with 16 voices, guitar or ukelele strum and a whole lot more.

Its makers claim that this electronic one-man band could well be replacing the small orchestra in clubs and restaurants within a few years.

When NME contacted Mike Evans of the Musician's Union on the subject, he tended to reject this idea, saying that most of these electronic devices produced to date were only used for novelty effects and would never seriously take the place of musicians.

He admitted though that if electronic instruments began to sound like the real thing and began to be used in studios in place of humans this could pose a serious threat.

In such a case M.U. legislation, similar to that limiting the studio use of the Mellotron, might have to be enforced.

This has been a Short Cool Look At Contemporary Technoflash Hardware.

DICK TRACY

BENYON

PERSONAL

JOHNNY, DEE DEE, JOEY AND TOMMY Come back, all is forgiven. If you can record an album Sounds calls "crass, simple, funny, catchy and brilliant" you can surely spare a thought for your dear MOTHER.

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MARLON PUSHES INDIAN 'ROOTS'

MARLON BRANDO, for many years a champion of the rights of the American Indians, has announced plans for a 13-part TV series of 90 minute episodes in the style of *Roots* to be called *The First American*.

Its aim will be to portray the whole history of the "red race" from the time they crossed over the Bering Sea into Canada and gradually spread across the American continent and down into Mexico, Central and South America. The series would include episodes on the Aztec, the Mayas and the Incas and will strive for complete accuracy, even to the extent of the Indians speaking in their ancient tongues.

Brando and TV producer John Beck are the only whites involved in the project and will provide technical assistance only, the script and artistic control being firmly in the hands of the Indians.

The National Endowment for Humanities is providing about 65 per cent of the $2,800,000 needed for the series and Brando intends to try and raise the rest from countries like Mexico and Canada which have Indian origins.

□ DICK TRACY

PUNKS IN PORTUGUESE SOCCER FOUL-UP

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN three punk rock bands meet 600 Portuguese immigrant football fans? This question must have bothered us all at one time or another — and this the story of a man who answered it.

He actually booked said punk rock bands to perform for said Portuguese immigrant football fans in London over Easter.

That man was Rui de Castro, and this is the story of his Great Sociological Experiment . . .

Once upon a time, in the northern city of Newcastle, there lived a punk rock group called Penetration: Pauline (vocals, 19), Gary (guitar, 18), Gary Smallman (drums, 17), and the economically named R (bass, 18).

One day they sent a five-song demo tape to Warm Records boss Rui de Castro, the Portuguese punk-about-town manager of The Adverts and unwitting big match promoter.

To their surprise they received a recording contract in the post. And as, according to Penetration manager Peter Lloyd, it appeared to be a photo copy of The Adverts' contract with Stiff, with Penetration and Warm substituted where appropriate, they took it to a lawyer, who declared it "illegal".

However, both Gaye Advert and Rui claim he (Rui) only ever *saw* the Adverts-Stiff contract, and Rui says he drew up his *own* contract, modelled on the Stiff version without legal help.

Penetration were under the impression it was a five-year deal, which Rui denies. According to him it was for one single only, with the single rights in Warm's hands for five years.

This sets the tone for our entire unfortunate tale: misunderstandings all along the line, with Rui at the middle of it all and Penetration close behind.

Anyway, the next time Penetration heard from Rui was when he booked them to play a gig with Warm label bands 'Warm' and The Adverts at Bonham-Carter House, 52 Malet St, WC1, on Easter Sunday. He promised them expenses of £15 plus a free meal and, although it would mean losing out, the band decided it was worth it for exposure in the big city.

RUI DE CASTRO (second from left) with some Adverts

The trip became even more worthwhile when, after approaches from both Lloyd and de Castro, the Roxy club booked them in as support to Generation X on Easter Saturday, paying them £20 — a fiver more than local *support* bands, apparently.

Rui then had talks with Roxy manager Andy Czezowski about the possibility of recording Penetration live — and, typically, booked a mobile unit in anticipation. Czezowski, however, wasn't interested.

According to Rui, this was because he's doing his own "Live At The Roxy" album —and neither was Czezowski interested in leasing Warm Records his leftovers, much to de Castro's chagrin.

Rui cancelled the mobile studio.

Penetration by this time seem to have been treating their benefactor somewhat casually. Not only do they claim they didn't want to record at Roxy anyway, but they didn't even put Rui's name on the guest list.

When Rui arrived he managed to get in with a friend who *was* guestlisted, but as he was standing at the bar a bouncer actually came looking for him and demanded either payment or exit. Rui, evidently out of favour at the punk paradise, stormed out.

Anyway, Sunday morning rolled round, and Penetration called Rui from their stop-over in Leytonstone, East London. Just as well, because although de Castro had initially assured them that the Bonham-Carter Hall had its own PA, it now transpired that in his opinion it was inadequate for the subtleties of punk rock and please would Penetration bring theirs over.

They arrived that afternoon to find The Adverts soundchecking. As the bands had been promised free food and drink on top of expenses, Penetration decided to await their turn to soundcheck stoking up a bit — and behold, a veritable feast was spread out on the bar.

Imagine their surprise, as the wine began to take effect, when droves of foreigners, from old folks to babies, began to arrive for the evening's festivities.

The Portuguese immigrant football fans (for it is they) were equally astonished to find their banquet residing in the stomachs of a group of unkempt punk rock musicians — and the upshot of it all was that the bands were promptly evicted, one musician getting punched for wiping his hands on a Portuguese flag and Penetration receiving no payment whatsoever. The 600 immigrants spent the evening gloomily consuming the punks' edible rejects accompanied by a clapped-out gramophone.

We now turn to an irritated and slightly hysterical gentleman called

FABULOUS FRINGE FREAKOUT

ONE OF the more interesting events being organised to coincide with the irrelevant Silver Jubilee celebrations is called The Festival for Mind and Body, which opens at Olympia this week.

For the first time a multitude of "fringe" phenomena — from alternative technology to health foods, from psychic phenomena to organic gardening, biofeedback to sufism — are gathered together under one roof to display their claims, philosophies and artifacts.

Major set pieces of the Festival include rides in a helium balloon up and down inside Olympia's National Hall, a silverclad 50-foot dome housing the mystical paintings by William Arkle and a rose shaped garden, and the largest wholefood restaurant in Britain.

Every day there will be lectures and film shows by authorities in various fields — including the spiritual community at Findhorn, biofeedback, flying saucers, buddhism, E.S.P., the work of Wilhelm Reich, and much more.

The Festival runs until April 24. Enquiries: 159 George Street, London W1. Tel: (01) 723 7256.

□ DICK TRACY

New Album
TREASON

SHSP 4063 also available on cassette

ON TOUR

Wed.	April 27	**London** Marquee
Fri.	April 29	**Hull** S.U. Queens Gdns.
Fri.	May 13	**London** City Poly
Sat.	May 14	**Birmingham** Barbarellas
Tues.	May 17	**Leeds** Poly
Fri.	May 20	**Edinburgh** Harriot Watt College
Sat.	May 21	**Glasgow** University
Fri.	June 3	**Scarborough** Penthouse

HARVEST

Marketed by EMI Records Limited, 20 Manchester Square, London W1A 1ES.

("Where did you get my number?" — "From the phone book") for enlightenment. Mr Cabral is a member of an as-yet-untitled committee of 20 Portuguese immigrants who last week set out to lauch their organisation, disigned to act as a social focus for London's Portuguese community, with a spectacular double event.

In the afternoon a football match took place, one team flying over from Paris specially to play, and the match was to be followed by a grand dance with raffles and nosh and suchlike — and free admission.

One of the committee asked his friend Rui de Castro to supply a couple of groups. Little did they realise they would encounter in the leprous flesh this horrifying punk rock phenomenon they had read so much about in the press.

Sadly, their preconceptions were simply reinforced — though Mr Cabral stresses that The Adverts were well behaved and did get paid £9.00. They were only dismissed because it was obvious their music would not be suited to the event.

Among accusations flying against Penetration is one from one of Cabral's stewards that a musician drew a knife (Lloyd denies this), while Rui says that Gary threatened to "beat his head in", that he tried to stop them scoffing the grub but failed (the musicians' nosh was to be served later backstage), and that Penetration were aping the Pistols antics.

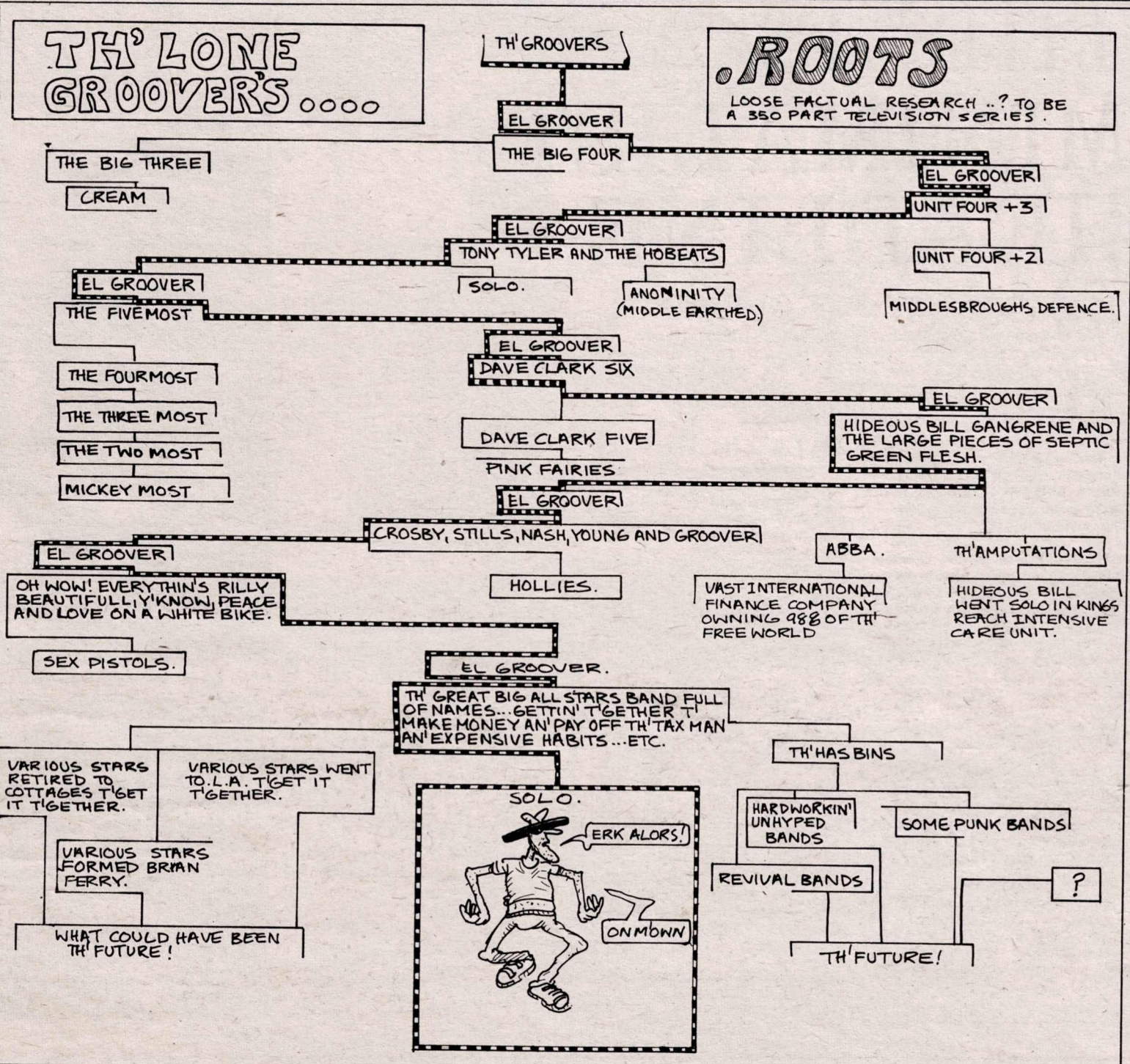
Penetration claim Rui was boozing along with them, that it was Warm's stand-in drummer (John Moss, from a Leeds band called London, who played with The Clash for a while and was on expenses) who besmirched the flag, and that most of the trouble took place while they and The Adverts were out taking a break in the pub.

Rui de Castro, Mr Cabral and Penetration all claim to have lost money over the fiasco, and Penetration still seem to think it was actually a Greek wedding reception after all.

The one question that even Rui de Castro cannot really answer, however, remains: why the hell were three punk rock bands booked to entertain 600 Portuguese immigrants football fans in the first place?

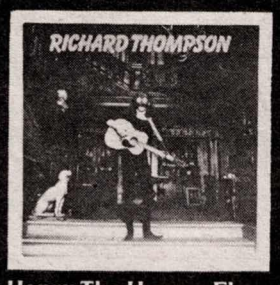
At least we now know what happens . . . .

□ PHIL McNEILL

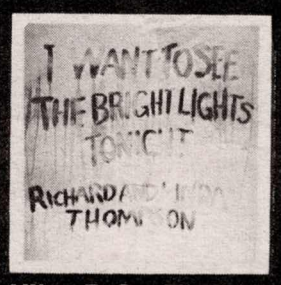


ON TOUR
THE RICHARD & LINDA THOMPSON BAND

BRIGHTON, The Dome. 29th April
ESSEX UNIVERSITY. 30th April
LONDON, Theatre Royal, Drury Lane 1st May
tickets: £2.50; £2.25; £2.00; £1.50;
from Box Office 01-836 8108
GUILDFORD, Surrey University. 6th May
CANTERBURY, Odeon. 7th May
CAMBRIDGE, Lady Mitchell Hall. 11th May
BIRMINGHAM, Town Hall. 13th May
MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY. 14th May
STEVENAGE, Gordon Craig Theatre. 15th May
KEELE UNIVERSITY. 18th May
NORTH STAFFS POLYTECHNIC. 20th May



Henry The Human Fly
Album ILPS 9197



I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight
Album ILPS 9266

Hokey Pokey
Album ILPS 9305

Pour Down Like Silver
Album ILPS 9348

a new album is due for late summer release

ISLAND

THIS IS A MINIMALIST HEADLINE

. . . for MILES' neo-structuralist look at New York hotshots TALKING HEADS

DAVID BYRNE: "At first, people said we were real intellectual and only smarties would like us — but then all these *kids* came along and liked us and that proves they were wrong!"

Right now Talking Heads are *the* cult band in New York City. I went to CBGBs to hear them and half of the new wave bands in New York were in the audience.

They're splashed all over *Punk, New York Rocker* and *Gig* magazines, not to mention the *New York Times* and the New York *Daily News*. Personally, I think their "Love-Building On Fire" is the best single released in a twelve-month — even better than Television's "Marquee Moon".

Talking Heads: David Byrne, lead guitar, lead vocals, composer of all their songs. A hirsute, tense looking man who folds his arms, tucking his hands in as if he was in a straight jacket. When his hands escape, they play nervously with objects nearby. I have a tape interview of him rustling book matches.

His speaking voice is quite low — normal — but when singing it veers toward a high vibrato. Though he's taking lessons for it, this large but unstable range has been part of the charm of Talking Heads for their cult fans.

Martina Weymouth is the bass player. She is neat, petite, has close cropped blonde hair and dresses in Young Conservative sports wear. She wields a powerful bass which holds the group together since both drums and guitar are clipped and sparse.

Chris Frantz is the drummer. He talks in a slow, liquid, campy New England voice as if his vocal chords were hydraulically controlled. He gestures as though he were holding a Martini in his hand. His drumming is brisk, terse and pared down to a minimum — a style which reflects his art school training and his interest in Andy Warhol and the Minimalists.

The band began at the Rhode Island School Of Design where they were all three studying. At first David and Chris were in a party band called The Artistics—playing Smokey Robinson and Lou Reed songs just for friends. Like Roxy Music, they have the art school sensibility but whereas Ferry got off on the Decadent movement, Talking Heads come from the more cerebral tradition of New York minimal art: simple shapes and colours. David, in fact, didn't paint at all — he just used to type out questionaires as works of art:

"Some were about the United States and some of them were about Love. Some of them you had to circle different things . . . ." He gulps back his words — I figured he didn't want to talk about his work.

But art college wasn't stimulating enough for them. David dropped out and took a hippy trip around the States. Chris and David moved to New York City bringing Tina with them and decided to try and make it as a band. David: "When you're growing up, you always want to be in a band. Always in the back of your mind if anyone asked you what you want to be, you'd want to be in a band. It was always 'Well, that's a pretty long shot' so it was 'Well, I'll take the chance'.

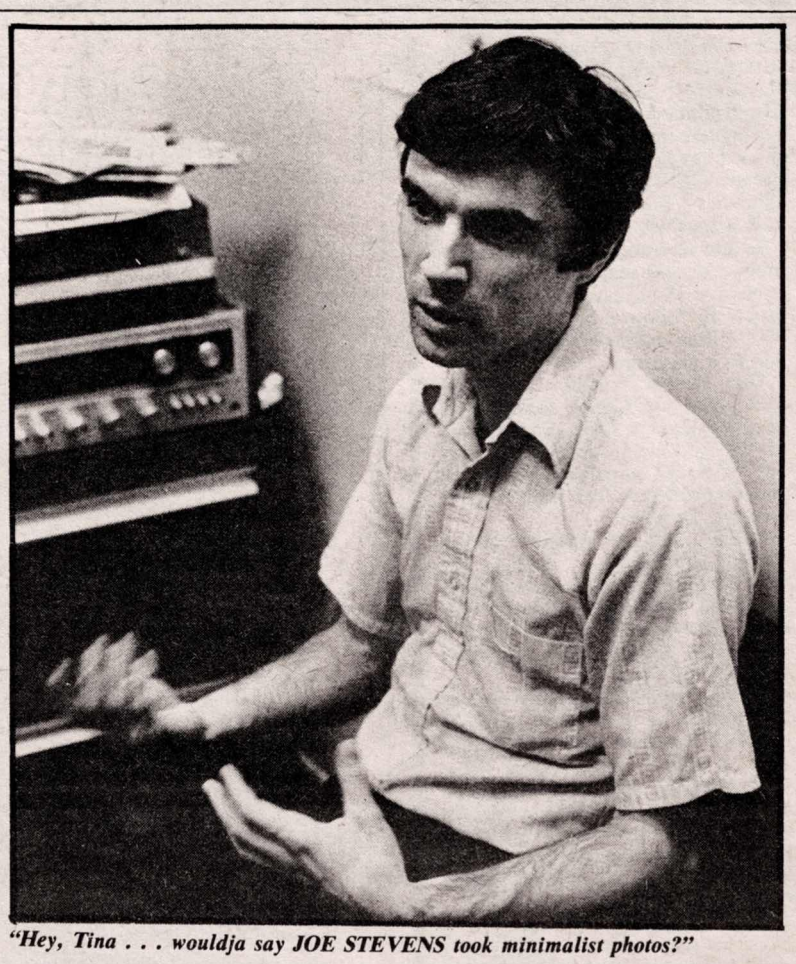
"After rehearsing for about six months and getting some material together — we lived near CBGBs and we noticed that here was a place where few bands were playing at the time and very few people were coming to at the time. It was just beginning and at times there would be ten people in the audience. We thought it would be a fine place for us to get our thing together and find out what worked in front of an audience. Relatively quickly after that, there started to be more and more groups there . . . ." David sat back sharply — as if he'd already said too much.

When they moved to Manhattan they expected to find a bass player relatively quickly but this wasn't to be so. Tina, who was thought of as a singer, was invited instead to join the group as bass player. It was one of the wisest moves they could have made since she plays a solid, hypnotic, repetitive line that supports the rest of them.

I asked them what influence their art training had on their music. David didn't think too much: "Pretty much normal things, like trying not to have any breaks — trying not to have any extraneous musical things going on that aren't necessary, that don't contribute — and try not to have everyone doing exactly the same thing if that's not necessary . . . ."

It seems that playing their material

□ *continues over page*



"Hey, Tina . . . wouldja say JOE STEVENS took minimalist photos?"

"Naw, David . . . neostructuralist f'sure."

IAN GILLAN BAND

IAN GILLAN BAND TAKE OFF ON U.K. TOUR

APRIL
29th CARDIFF University
30th BRADFORD University
MAY
3rd PLYMOUTH Fiesta
4th SLOUGH Falcrum Theatre
5th CROMER West Runton Pavillion
6th BURY ST EDMONDS Fortune Theatre
7th SOUTHAMPTON University
8th DUNSTABLE Queensway Hall
11th DUBLIN Stadium
12th BELFAST Whitla Hall
14th LONDON Rainbow
15th MIDDLESBOROUGH Town Hall
16th NEWCASTLE City Hall
17th ABERDEEN Music Hall
18th GLASGOW Apollo
19th EDINBURGH Playhouse
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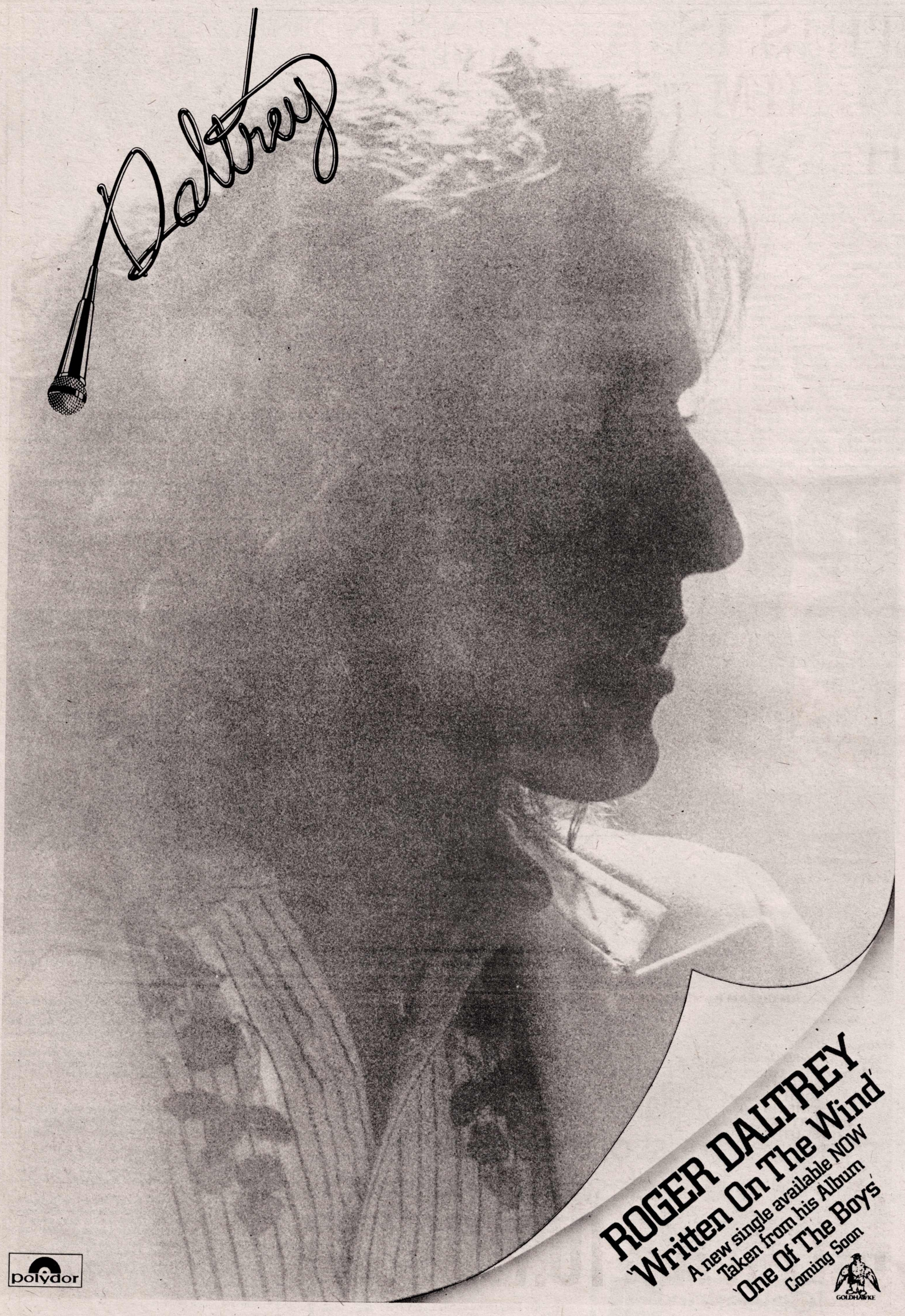
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TALKING HEADS CONT.

■ *From previous page*

live did more to influence David's writing than art school. "When I first started writing, my stuff was more, I guess, Structural, Structuralist, stuff like that. And a lot of it wasn't very uplifting type sentiments but then, after we played it, is was just so much fun playing it that I can't say negative things when I'm having so much fun. So I'm having to start writing songs which are more fun to sing, which coincide with us having fun singing."

An example of the negative sentiments David talked about is "Psycho Killer", the only song in their repetoire which dates back to Artistics days. "Psycho Killer, Qu'est-ce que c'est?" (What is it?) — surreal non-sequitors.

"The Artistics was another attitude", Tina says. When they perform the number live David is galvanized into a twitching marionette. "My voice does sometimes get a little high" he admits. He sure doesn't look as if he's having fun.

They have just added another member to the line-up; Jerry Harrison who used to be with The Modern Lovers is on their first album. I asked them how they had gone about finding a new member after playing for almost two years as a trio.

Chris: "There were a number of different musicians that we had come up to our loft to make tapes — not necessarily even for auditions. Like for example we had a cello player — just to see how it would sound on a song — get an idea of what we were capable of doing with other people. We met Jerry up in Boston and later met a friend of his who also used to be in the Modern Lovers, Ernie Brooks, who said that Jerry would be interested in joining. So we really heard it through the grapevine that Jerry might be available."

David: "Just what we wanted. Someone who could play guitar and keyboards. They definitely needed someone because David was having to play full chords all the time, doubling as both rhythm and lead guitarist. David: "The songs can have more dynamics. If there's only one guitar what can I do? But if there's more instruments there's greater variety of texture."

Right now Talking Heads are in the studio working on their first album just prior to a European tour supporting The Ramones. They have chosen Tony Bongiovi to be their producer. Bongiovi has worked with everyone from Jimi Hendrix though Mitzi Gaynor to The Ramones and did Talking Heads single "Love — Building On Fire".

The future? Which direction is the band going in?

David: "Better songs. Better performances. More efficient."

. . . . And the subject of future songs?

David: "Just try to be honest, contemporary and things like that without getting too obscure."

□ MILES

STONES IN MISTRANSLATION RUMBLE

MANY STRANGE things have been written about the Stones during their long and illustrious career but the "English" sleeve notes on a new Stones package which Decca are marketing in France take the biscuit.

The five-album greatest hits set is immaculately packaged in a big black box with the name of the band tastefully written on the front in multicoloured sequins. Each album has a picture of one of the band on one side and brief biographical notes in English and French on the other. Unfortunately, the translator seems to have been suffering from an overdose of absinthe when he produced the English version.

Brian Jones, we are told, "studied also, but not for long, then he did all sorts of little jobs to survive, besides he was fired quite quickly . . . He always was a personage and a very particular magnetism emanated from him. Everybody came to speak to him, he attracted people and had an amazing success with girls. He also tried all sorts of experiences before others."

Bill Wyman "started sooner to play music (as Charlie). Before doing his military service in the Air Force, he worked for a while with a bookmaker. His memory is fantastic, and you'll have to consult him to recall the STONES story."

Keith Richard's father "was an electrician (or baker depending (!) on source); his grandfather played saxo . . . He went to Art School, as many musicians. Keith explains: 'You're there if you can't saw wood or file metal properly. I did there "graphic drawing" because my drawings were not too bad. I stayed there three years and during that time, at least, learned to play the guitar.'"

Mick Jagger's father was "a professor of gymnastics" and we're told "he went regularly to London School of Economics, thanks to a Government aid, which helped the others to live for a while. Occasionally he was 'sports adviser' in a US base, ice-cream seller and other little jobs."

Charlie Watts is the only one who escapes unscathed, his biography being more or less readable.

Who said the age of interesting sleevenotes was dead?

□ **INSPECTOR CLOUSEAU**

I WAS A TEENAGE COKE ADDICT Part Two: In which Charlie Watts contemplates the possibility of snorting a drumstick.

Fab pic sent by reader Ken Doig of Dundee Scotland, from The Rolling Stones Monthly, October '64.

INSIDE DOPE

BY DICK TRACY

AFTER many years success as one of the major counter cultural cartoon strips, *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*, created and drawn by Gilbert Shelton, are about to be launched as a major movie.

Not a cartoon film but a real, live action drama, it is to be called *Gone With The Weed* and my West Coast contact informs me that Furry Freak lookalike contests are now being held in California. There are also rumours that Adam 'Batman' West will appear in it, but exactly what part he would take is not clear.

ZARA Music Records have announced that as part of their campaign for the new Spartacus album, "Watching You Grow", they will be giving away seeds with the first 10,000 copies sold, containing a caption "Plant Your Own and Watch It Grow."

Spartcaus R. is quoted as saying: "One of the greatest pleasure in life is watching children and other living things grow, including pot plants, herbs and flowers."

AN UNUSUAL dope movie called *The Polk County Pot Plane*, believed to be the first ever movie made about a real-life drug smuggling incident, is due for release in the US shortly.

The story goes that on the night of August 4, 1975, a four-engined DC-4 laden with dope landed on top of Treat Mountain in Polk County, Georgia, on a crude 100 foot runway illuminated by a string of 100 watt bulbs powered with a portable generator.

All would have been well except that the pilot's approach was so low that a truck driver reported it to the police thinking the plane had crashed. The Feds arrived in force, arrested 14 people, and confiscated 3,000 lbs of marijuana and 74½ lbs of hashish which they claimed came from Colombia.

After the bust, the plane stayed atop Treat Mountain for many months and became a major tourist attraction in the area before it was bought at an auction for $20,000 by Jim West who is the man behind the movie. In an effort to make the film as realistic as possible West invited people arrested in the bust to appear as themselves. Lawyers advised against it.

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Let's talk about ALCOHOL.

OTIS REDDING'S WIDOW heard Frankie Miller's music for the first time in LA recently and she broke down and cried.

That's the biggest compliment the man will ever get. It's also entirely understandable — because when it comes to The Great White Hope vocal most redolent of classic Sixties Stax, you can forget Rod Stewart, Joe Cocker and even Paul Rodgers — Frankie Miller rules, even though mass acknowledgement of the fact is yet to come.

The music business line on Frankie's inability to break on through to the other side is that his love of the "high life" is what's holding him back.

"As far as the reputation fer getting outa ma heed an' things," he drawls in his pure Bridgeton, Glasgow accent, "Ah'm completely off spirits an' only drink white wine now an' sometimes beer . . . when ah was outa ma heed on spirits ah couldnae work . . ."

We're sitting in a plastic-and-chrome record company boardroom because it's mid-afternoon in London in the rain and the pubs are shut. But our surroundings are tolerable because few record companies would have shown Frankie Miller the love, belief and unswerving loyalty that Chrysalis have given this gravel'an'grit-larynxed Scot through six years and four albums.

FRANKIE UNCORKS the vine, I share what I've got and he reflects aloud on the destructive route of alcohol excess.

"I used to get up there on stage wrecked outa ma heed but I don't *like* it anymore," he says. "I like going on straight. I used to love getting tanked up, but you ain't good for no-one when ya tanked — especially women.

"I get really aggressive when ah'm pissed an' it's not really me . . . it's an excuse to do and say things - - - Like at the London New Victoria gig at the start of April when ah was on stage saying that Margaret Thatcher is a Nazi . . ."

Yeah, you said that but do you *believe* it?

"Yeah! Ah believe it, but the kids have come to listen to ma music an' hear me sing, it's not right for me to be saying those things because ah'm not on stage to do that . . ."

How come you were so out of it and laying your usually-guarded politico opinions on the crowd at the London New Vic gig if you've given up the hard stuff?

"Somebody spiked ma drink!" Frankie asserts, the memory causing that Glasgae tenement temper to flare up briefly. "When I went on stage ah had nae control and ah'd only drunk a bottle of wine which ah can handle *easy*, real easy . . ."

Do you reckon that it was done not because somebody wanted to see you screw up but more because they felt that your *image* has constantly gotta be pushed to the fore, in the same manner that retards used to slip Jimi Hendrix Mickey Finn Acid Drops to perpetuate the guitar king of the chemical cosmos persona?

"Well, ah dinna know *who* did it, or *why* they did it, all ah know is it was *done* and ah was out'f it when ah shouldnae been.

"Ah told the audience to shut up five times!" he says incredulously, and his feelings about how he wants to come across on stage remind me of Strummer — enough confidence in your own hardness to not have the *need* to abuse your audience (the most obnoxious performers inevitably turn out to be real GIRLS off stage) and come on like some Wide-Boy Of The Apocalypse.

"An' the worst thing was ah didnae *remember* saying those things," Frankie says. "Ah didnae learn ah'd done it until the next day!"

ANOTHER INTERESTING aspect of Miller's personality is the empathy the man has always felt for people who are locked inside a prison, a no-bullshit understanding devoid of Outlaw Romanticism that he has always backed up with hard work.

Like the San Quentin gig of '75, three years after the Johnny Cash 'benefit' of '72 — a much-vaunted concert that Frankie Miller has scant respect for . . .

"He's a big businessman and he made a helluva lot of *money* outa that," Frankie says with scornful disgust. "It was all bullshit. If you wanna play for prisoners then just do it without the press and music side interfering."

Is there a specific reason why you care so much about prisoners? I'm thinking of the song "The Rock" on the, as they say, album of the same name with its sleeve note dedication . . .

"Well, ah care because so many of ma friends who ah grew up with in Glasgow are inside and they get treated very badly. And perhaps, if ah didnae sing, then ah'd be there with 'em. I left school at fifteen and was an apprentice electrician for a while and ah couldna stomach it.

"Ah get ma aggression out on stage."

Yeah, *most* of the time, Frankie.

He smiles and pours himself another glass of wine. "Ah wrote 'The Rock' when I was standing on Alcatraz . . ."

"I saw myself standing on the rock/And I thought of a man who couldn't conform to society, I took a look in a cell/That's when my mind began to roll/Four grey walls with nothing and nowhere else to go/And I thought of all the men who would never sell their soul/I thought of all the men who couldn't take the telling what to do/And I saw myself standing on the rock . . ."

"We set up that gig through the Hell's Angels," Frankie says. "They approached us — top Angels who haven't got any prison form otherwise the authorities in San Quentin wouldn't have had any of it. The Angels in America are very much like the Mafia, it's a business and they make bread. The very top Angels don't wear colours to avoid hassles with the poo-lice."

The *who?*

"The POLICE!" he repeats, chuckling at the temporary language barrier. "We did the gig in the recreation yard where the guards can't carry guns because they'd get stabbed and have their weapons taken. Only the guards in the catwalk perimeter have got guns . . ."

Did you get a chance to talk to any of the prisoners?

He nods. "Very heavy dudes. Stabbings all the time. Tattoos across their necks . . ."

HE TALKS about the Saturday night dances in Glasgow when he was growing up that taught him that violence is an unfortunate fact of life, and I ask him about what happened in the aggravation down the Speakeasy when Brian Robertson and Frankie got into a fight with a crew of people who apparently came looking for trouble and found it.

The main result of the incident was that Brian got his arm cut up bad with a broken glass and had to pull out of Thin Lizzy's USA tour, both band and Brian later coming to the realisation that the twenty-one-year-old guitar player had played his last Lizzy gig . . .

"A bloke was gonna hit me with a glass — he'd broken it and was about to screw it in ma face — and Brian put up his arm and got it instead of me . . ."

That kind of loyalty to a friend could sound unbelievable to you if you don't know Brian Robertson. But I got to know him well enough When I was on the road with Lizzy last year to know it's exactly the kind of thing he would do.

And, like his mate he got chived for, Brian has a habit of getting out of his head on booze — one reason he was getting a lot of flak with Lizzy.

"I was legless, couldn't even see," Frankie recalls. "After Brian got cut I just remember hitting three people — one with ma head, one with ma boot, one with ma fist. Later I was on the phone to get some people down from Glasgow . . . but I knew that if I did that it would turn into a war. And people get killed in wars . . ."

WHEN SOMEBODY'S got an image, a reputation, whatever, there's always the danger of finding yourself having to play up to the role. Do you ever feel pressure from that kind of thing, of having to live up to being Frankie Miller?

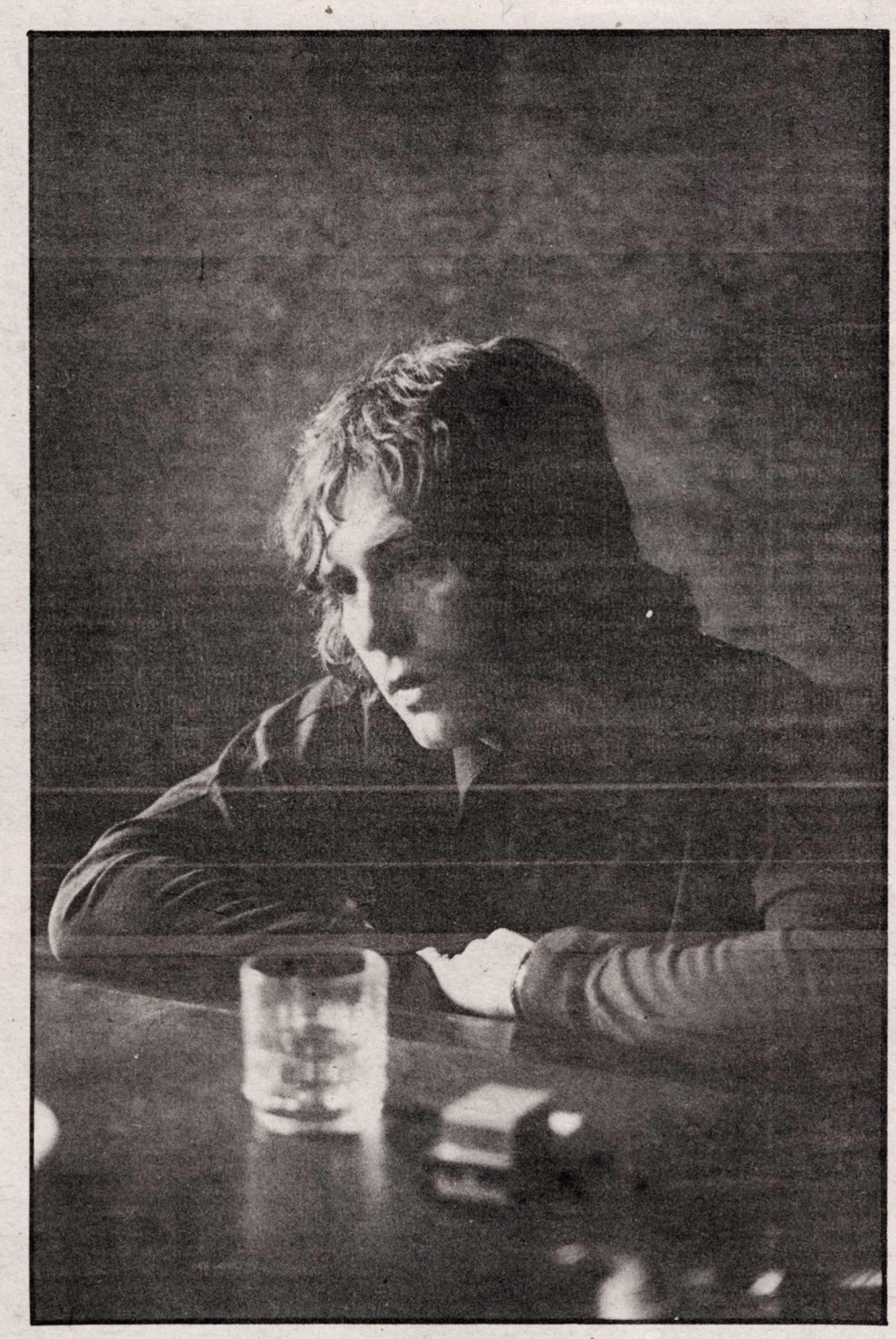
"I've got a bad reputation but ah don't play it up. It would be bullshit if ah did. It's just that the hard stuff makes me crazy.

"The band I've got now is the first *band* that I've had since 1969 and that's why ah think my music is better than it's ever been, and that's why I'm happier than I've ever been and feel that *now* it's really going to happen. But it's gotta be on ma terms or else not at all . . ."

Do you miss the hard booze?

"Nah, white wine's good!" he laughs. "And a helluva a lot healthier. I feel much better than when I was doing a bottle of brandy a day — and it's me that's gotta look in the mirror.

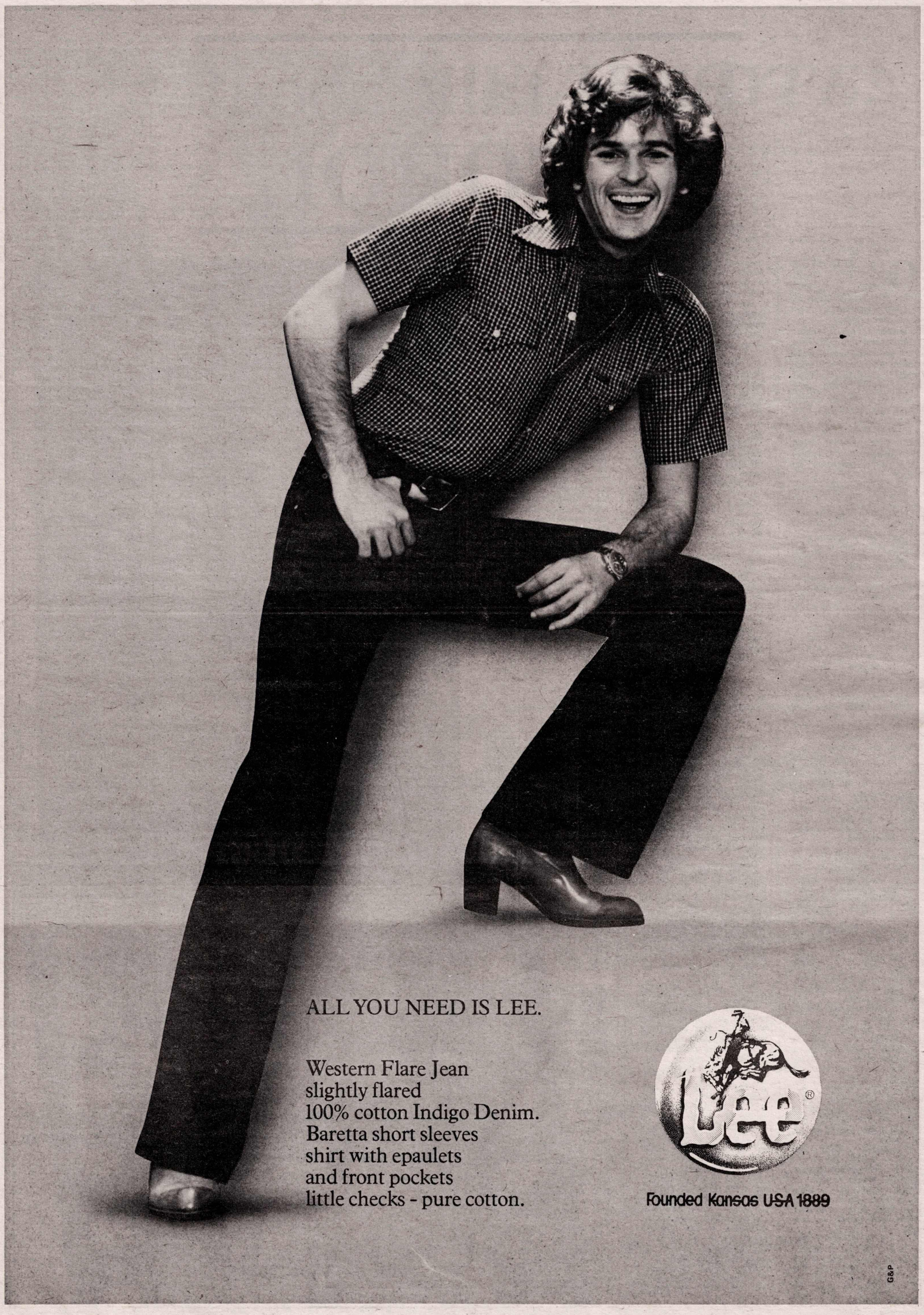
"Or not . . ."



FRANKIE MILLER instructs TONY PARSONS on: How To Avoid Becoming A Rock'n'Roll Star

(Take one bottle of brandy, plus another bottle of brandy, and, finally, another bottle of brandy. Then fall over.)

Pictorial evidence: PENNIE SMITH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Scrawl it on the Westway: RAY WOZ ERE FIRST. Five years ahead of his time with depression rock, RAY DAVIES has been completely OUT of time for the past few years with The Great Rock Theatre Experiment. He's now moved on yet again, so the time is right to look back on what all that dressing up achieved — in other words: Does Rock Theatre Work?

In the second part of our amazing definitive type thing on the career of English rock's foremost eccentric genius, PHIL McNEILL ponders these and other hefty questions.

THE BACK seat of a limousine bound for Heathrow Airport, with one's subject's mind focussed on his flight to the USA, is not the best situation for a biographical interview. I found this out the hard way last month when, following up the interview published here last week, I spent several hours trying to polish off The Life And Times Of Raymond Douglas Davies.

Under the circumstances we didn't fare too badly, and everything would have been hunky semi-dory but for (a) an unfortunate mishap when Ray, a self-confessed electronic jinx, kindly took the mike in his hand for a spell and, as I later discovered, the tape machine promptly failed to work for the duration (my fault actually) and (b) an even more unfortunate contretemps when, in my eagerness to cover everything relevant, I chucked Ray a rather blunt question about dissatisfied ex-Konk Records artist Tom Robinson, and elicited an extremely paranoid response.

This happened, in fact, while we were sitting in the airport car park and, after first protesting that Konk had no place in a Kinks interview (which is patently untrue), and then vowing that "if you wish to pursue that line I'll go to every length I can to have this tape bought back — I swear to God I'll do it," Ray stormed out of the car without even saying goodbye.

As I rushed after him he even accused me of spending three hours interviewing him simply to get round to the subject of Tom Robinson!

The interview, which had hardly yielded a wealth of hot material anyway, ended in a shambles. But word reached me later that Ray regretted his anger, and as I, for my part, had had no intention of stirring things up, we agreed to meet again on his return to London. A two-hour session was booked up.

This time we met in the big-windowed reception room at Konk where our first meeting had taken place. Secure in the knowledge that I had two hours, I took my time chatting about The Kinks' new album, "Sleepwalker", as a prelude to taking Ray back over some of the ground covered less than thoroughly on the way to Heathrow.

Things were looking good, when suddenly after 45 minutes Ray's roadie stuck his head round the door and unceremoniously brought the proceedings to a close, leaving me stranded in '77 with only the slenderest of tightrope threads connecting me back to 1971.

The safety net I have to fall back on is The Kinks' history on record, so Ray's just going to have to take a back seat — though you'll hear him piping up now and again — and let the beleaguered interviewer lead the way through the band's fairly extraordinary career this decade.

A re-assessment is about due, as The Kinks this year released their first non-concept album for ten years.

As the only rock'n'roller to have really tried a complete synthesis of rock and theatre or to have spent so much time working in thematic albums, Ray Davies' defection to "normality" poses several questions nobody else is qualified to ask. This piece attempts to find the answers.

EVEN in The Kinks' constantly evolving career, there are times when you can identify a watershed album. "Muswell Hillbillies" (1971) is one. The first album for a new label, the first album incorporating the horns and keyboards that would come almost to dominate the whole of their work on RCA, it also revealed for the first time the full extent of the intense despair underlying the wry cynicism of The Kinks' previous work.

It was also, to some people, the last good Kinks album . . .

The fold-out sleeve depicts The Kinks, fragile and just plain people, up against the corrugated iron fencing around Retcar St, N19. The gloomy Victorian towers of part of Highgate Hill's Whittington Hospital loom prison-like on one side and a glimpse of the greenery down Dartmouth Park Hill on the other gives the scene that North London village-over-the-city feeling that imbues this above all other Kinks albums — the traditional suburban decaying *life* holding out grimly against the modern urban dead machine.

This determined roots allegiance reflects the circumstances under which Ray decided to change labels for "Muswell Hillbillies": he'd been in a business meeting one day with Warner Brothers, his previous American label, and had gagged with horror to find all parties calling him product. His decision to change to RCA rather than any other company, he swears, came because he was in their offices the day Arsenal clinched the double.

"They'll try and make me study elocution, because they say my accent isn't right, they can clear the slums as part of their solution, But they're never gonna kill my cockney pride, Cos I'm a Muswell Hillbilly boy . . ."

Bureaucracy is Public Enemy No.1 on "Muswell Hillbillies", abetted by automation and technology. Consequently The Kinks' music reflects this: further from the electric excitement of "You Really Got Me" it would be hard to venture.

Ray takes the brass from The Mike Cotton Sound, a conventional British soul group turned sessionmen, and inflicts the lugubrious cadences of The Salvation Army and '20s music hall upon them.

John Gosling, whom Ray describes as "primarily an organ player", has his first run at the Phantom Of The Opera melodrama that must haunt him by now — and the whole thing revolves around a strictly TCB rhythm section (of which Dave is a non-soloing integral part). C&W guitar intrudes bizarrely (but, to me, effectively) at odd intervals.

The deliberately unglamorous sound is itself conceptual: the band assumes an overall aural image to suit the requirements of the album, a sound in sympathy with an older, greyer, even more bewildered generation. Depression music that captures the sad facelessness of the front cover shot.

Without any dressing up, it was a concept album as theatrical as any of the later fancy dress put-on-shorts-and-play-schoolboys type episodes. Trouble was, it was *too* realistic.

Ray said in last week's interview that maybe "Sunny Afternoon" was "a bad thing, because I was getting away from making statements that were natural to me — I started to have characters, and I had to invent a character to sing it."

Now the very opposite was happening. Ray had come out into the open and made his own statements in his own persona for the first time in years — and it was having a strange effect.

Ray confesses that his 1973 White City "retirement" (while supporting The Edgar Winter Group, at the most ignominious of bum gigs, Ray quietly "retired" onstage) was partly as a result of his living

Pic: PENNIE SMITH

out too fully such suicidal and disillusioned songs as "Alcohol" from "Hillbillies" and "Sitting In My Hotel" from its successor, "Everybody's In Showbiz".

He needed to escape into the theatrical fantasy of "Preservation".

But on "Muswell Hillbillies" Davies was unafraid and uncompromising, and the expert song craftsman turned his attention to that easiest of subjects, which attracts so many sloganeering Peace & Love/Hate & War Dave Sparts — political protest — and brought it off with grace.

"20th Century Man" is a vehement howl of rage at the soullessness of the times; "Acute Schizophrenia Paranoia Blues", the prototype for other, lesser, "blues", sketches the phobic bewilderment of being a statistic; "Holiday" is an idiot grin postcard from the rest home...

"Muswell Hillbillies" took the 1966 dole queue classic, "Dead End Street", and spread it over an album — yet The Kinks managed to retain the intensity of that track throughout, Ray turning in a virtuoso performance by letting reality channel through.

It wasn't quite so fashionable in 1971 as it is now, and Ray's only reward was a lot of strain, a song called "Alcohol" to prop up the stage act, and the hairline cracks that would yawn open at White City two years later.

With stunning timing, considering that depression times rock is now fashionable, and considering that Arista's push on "Sleepwalker" equals free publicity for all previous Kinks product (sorry, Ray), RCA deleted "Muswell Hillbillies" last month.

IN 1971, however, particularly in America, RCA were tremendously enthusiastic about signing The Kinks (along with another, relatively unknown, British artist called David Bowie), and with a driving company behind them The Kinks' onstage popularity there even prompted one *NME* correspondent in January '72 to describe it as "akin to their early fan mania".

Thus for his next outing Ray decided to encapsulate that frenzied success in a package that would work on three levels: as a film, as a studio recorded commentary, and as a live recorded documentary. The title of this double live/studio album and its accompanying film would be "Everybody's In Showbiz — Everybody's A Star".

Unfortunately, the project proved slightly too ambitious.

The worst casualty was the film, which was never completed. A cinema verite job whose purpose was never quite defined — it was vaguely slated as a 45 minute TV documentary — it was made by a camera crew accompanying The Kinks on tour "like *Candid Camera*", according to the down-to-earth Mick Avory. The subject was to be not just The Kinks, but also the circus of rock world freaks with whom they were coming into contact almost for the first time, not having visited the States from '65 to '69.

"They're all dressed up in silly clothes," Avory observed. "Everybody wants to be a star."

If the film, which was still being planned when the "Showbiz" album was released around August 1972, was as half-cocked as its vinyl equivalent, maybe its non-completion was a mercy.

The live set had Davies, Davies, Avory, Dalton and Gosling augmented by Mike Cotton, John Beecham and Davy Jones on trumpet, trombone and baritone sax respectively. The gig, I believe, was at Carnegie Hall, and Ray and his audience were deep into an adoration trip: snatches of "Mr. Wonderful" and the "Banana Boat Song" and "Baby Face" . . . I guess you had to see it.

Five of the eight songs came from the previous album, "Muswell Hillbillies" — a curious choice of material, as the renditions were not so different from what had come out just the previous year, except with the balance tilted away from desperation and into jovial resignation. Music hall ruled OK.

But the most essential part of the tripartite operation had to be the studio record — and that was plain mysterious, boasting no sign whatsoever of the singleminded consistency of their last album, but rather ranging from the totally sublime to the plain mediocre.

Even more importantly, Ray ignored the unwritten and highly obvious law that if a concept album is to be *explicitly* conceptual then it must stick to the point throughout. That rule had been obeyed on "Hillbillies," and that was its prime strength; it was *only* as a body, in fact, that those songs could possibly work. "Showbiz," sadly, was like an album about Rock (Stardom, Hassles and Pressures of) interspersed with little vignettes of assorted weirdness that might possibly have hung together with the film, but seemed completely unconnected on record alone.

When they were good they were very very good: "Supersonic Rocket Ship" was like some early century vision of space travel, winding up, by the sound of the music, on an idyllic Caribbean island. *"We're gonna travel faster than light, So do up your overcoat tight."*

Then there was the celebrated "Celluloid Heroes," a single far too fragile for the success its admirers clamoured for. Still a (often the) highlight of the live show, it brimmed with sadness — a magnificent vocal performance — as it catalogued the names etched in the concrete down Hollywood Boulevard: *Rudolph Valentino looks very much alive, And he looks up ladies' dresses as they sadly pass him by . . . You can see all the stars as you walk down Hollywood Boulevard, Some that you recognise, some that you've hardly even heard of . . .*"

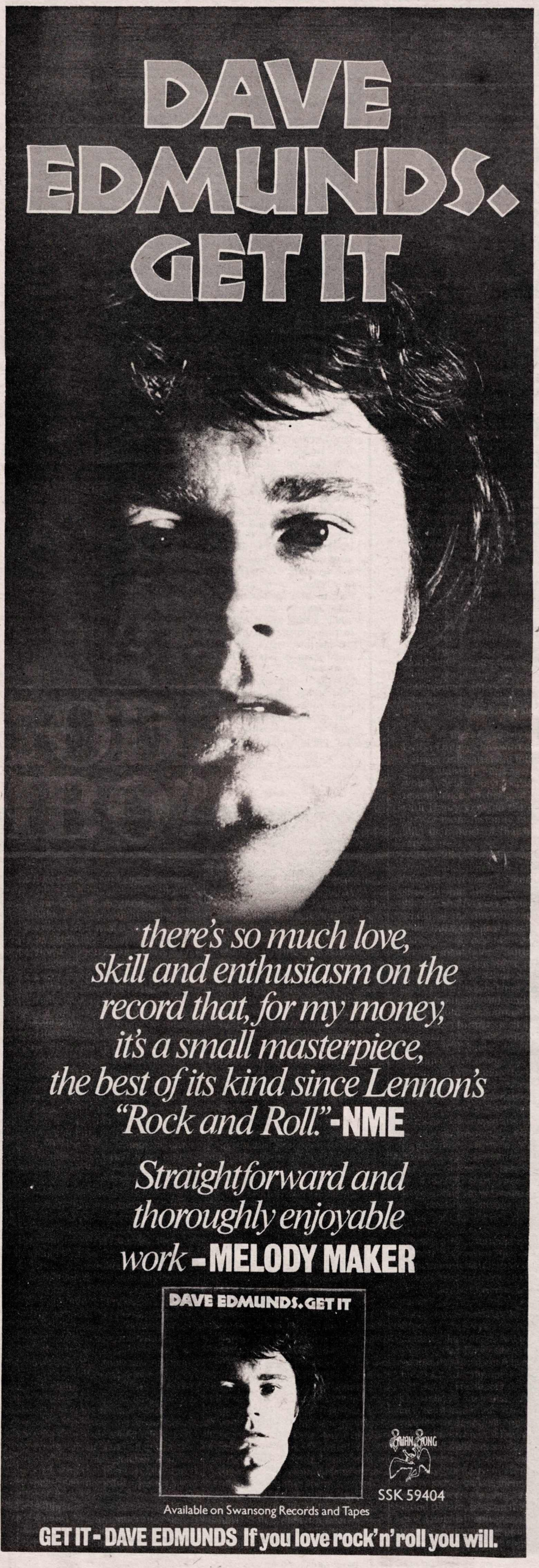
Musically, too, it transcended the rest of the album. Abandoning the horn-laden hokum that worked on "Hillbillies" but sounded dismal outside that context, "Heroes" floated on down the Boulevard on grandiose keyboardery, Procol Harum style.

The only similarly orchestrated track was, to my mind, best of the lot: "Sitting In My Hotel," an intensely sad study of the unreality of stardom — *"If my friends could see me now, driving round just like a film star, In a chaffeur driven jam jar, they would laugh . . . They would all be asking who I'm trying to be . . . Sitting in my hotel, hiding from the dramas of this great big world ... thinking about the countryside in June . . . If my friends could see me now, dressing up in my bow tie, Prancing round the room like some outrageous poove . . . All my friends would ask me what it's all leading to."*

What it was all leading to, it later transpired, was another crack-up, but even if you didn't know that, "Sitting In My Hotel" remains a heartbreaking lament for Ray Davies, for rock'n'roll, for any star machine . . . and for the ultimate ineffectuality of our measly ambitions.

At one point during our interview Ray ruefully mentioned the friends he can't

☐ *Continues over page*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there's so much love, skill and enthusiasm on the record that, for my money, it's a small masterpiece, the best of its kind since Lennon's "Rock and Roll." - NME
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In bed with Norman wife ("Soap Opera")

RAY DAVIES

☐ *From previous page*

play football with any more, because he's a star now — to them. "The change came when I was successful, and snobbery was the other way round." Ray is almost the only writer, out of so many who've tried, to have genuinely demystified the loneliness at the top.

The rest of "Everybody's In Showbiz" was comparatively inconsequential; too much oompah horn work, a couple of limp rockers, pretty trite songs about overeating, unreality, motorway food, criticism . . . life on the road in all its familiar guises.

THE KINKS, MEANWHILE, had been spending about £70,000 on building their own studios, and were waiting impatiently for their completion. Their ambitions were peaking; the film project, though abortive, had opened up new vistas, other media to explore. They began to think of old style shows and albums as "straight."

If they couldn't get the film - of - the - album together, and as their brush with Granada over "Arthur" had taught them the pitfalls of the TV - show - of - the - album, why not put the album onstage? As they planned their next venture, the rumours went out: The Kinks were going to put on a spectacular theatrical show based around ideas first propounded on "Village Green Preservation Society" back in '68.

In January 1973 The Kinks unveiled their "spectacular" at Drury Lane. Adding six more horns and six singers to their now established eight-piece line-up, Ray presented a mishmash of a show, underrehearsed, and disappointingly similar to a normal Kinks gig with a few frills.

The first show was a damp squib — but, nothing daunted, The Kinks were promising a companion album for April, wholly conceptual, the first "Act" of a multi-album extravaganza to be called "Preservation." The era of rock theatre had finally begun in earnest.

"PRESERVATION ACT I", "PRESERVATION ACT II" (double), "Soap Opera" and "Schoolboys in Disgrace" comprise a five album experiment that lost Ray Davies virtually all his credibility. Each album came complete with a full-blown theatrical stage show.

Basically, Ray's theatre period was a failure. The question is, why? And if Ray Davies couldn't do it, does this mean rock theatre is not viable at all?

Nobody in this country, and possibly in the world, was better equipped to make a concerted effort at conquering the rock musical (if you fear for your life, don't mention "opera" in Davies' presence). Davies is almost certainly the most gifted songwriter this country has produced — he had proved his ability on a range of songs wide enough to think he might write a decent song around any interesting scenario. Ray also proved himself a competent actor in *Loneliness Of The Long Distance Piano Player,* and he was used to extending themes over a whole album, usually thus far with success.

One body who realised Ray's qualifications was Granada TV. Not only had they originally commissioned (then blown out) "Arthur," but they now came to Ray and commissioned another TV musical. Thus was born *Starmaker,* which later became "Soap Opera."

In fact, I reckon *Starmaker* and "Soap Opera" were highly successful — an opinion at odds with other erstwhile Kinks fanciers around the office. The reasons for its success I'll enunciate later. The *fact* of its success makes it unique.

Eleven years since "A Quick One," and still only one decent rock play? (Never saw Helen Mirren in *Teeth And Smiles,* mind you). "Tommy" was a joke — half-hearted confusion in Townshend's hands, vacant spectacle in Russell's — and as for . . . what? *Evita? Godspell?* Alice Cooper? Rocky Horror?

The Kinks *are* the only rock theatre.

So let's ignore the lone goodie, "Soap Opera," and check Ray's downfall through the extraordinary "Preservation" saga — an obsessive trilogy which also takes in "Schoolboys In Disgrace," as that's supposed to be the examination of the schoolboy development of Ray's central character, the villain (that's right, villain — maybe I don't need to explain why it failed) Flash.

"PRESERVATION" ACTUALLY started quite promisingly. The first side of "Act I" is pretty good — hardly what you'd call a comprehensible plot, mind, but four good if a little musically underdeveloped songs dealing with various kinds of "preservation" (of village life, of unrequited love, of the parochial Swingin' Sixties, and of the greaser heritage) around one not so good song dealing with the trepidation of imminent change. A little more subtlety in the music, and dump the Gilbert & Sullivan overtones of "There's A Change In The Weather," and it would have been an excellent start.

It was rather unsettling, however, to note that these five songs were supposed to have been sung by a welter of different characters — The Chorus, The Tramp, Johnny Thunder, and Working Class Man, Middle Class Man and Upper Class Man.

We really started to get bogged down when we flipped the album. First The Vicar sings Ray's clever but slightly tiresome music hall cricket sermon, "Cricket" (*"Beware the demon bowler . . . he'll try to l.b.w . . ."*), and then comes the first song that really gets to grips with the plot - and like every single number that fulfills a similar role throughout the entire saga, it's awful.

"Money And Corruption" is a 3/4 drone by the chorus *"Crooked politicians betray the working man,"* etc., etc.) leading to Mr. Black's first song — Black is a politicain who hides power mania beneath a thin veneer of man - of - the - people sloganeering.

Having introduced this lifeless stereotype, the next song brings in the exploitative thug landlord / speculator Mr. Flash via "Here Comes Flash" (sung by The Scared Housewives!), another musically uninspired and lyrically inept plot song. The album is beginning to fall apart at the seams.

The best track on the album, "Sitting In The Midday Sun," almost rescues things as The Tramp delivers in classic summer Kink style, but "Act I" goes out on another downer as Flash and his Cronies in their Den perform a godawful naive and colourless number called "Demolition."

To say it set the tone for "Act II" is an understatement.

Could it be possible Ray already recognised defeat in the project? Probably not, but between "Act I" and "Act II" — on July 15, 1973, to be precise — Ray Davies did his brief public retirement thing. He soon bounced back with his most ambitious record ever and, as he now admits, *too* ambitious.

WHAT HORRIFIED HIS DETRACTORS about "Act II" was its unrelenting awfulness — two whole albums without a single really good song on them. In a way that very lack of "good songs" is a tribute to Ray's total devotion to the form; "good songs" became an irrelevant concept.

In the same way that, say, The Sex Pistols and The Bay City Rollers cannot really be judged against other music (a standard against which both groups have very little going for them) because they transcend music, by virtue of the fact that they don't even play for the same responses as other groups, because they operate by totally different rules as if playing rugby while the rest of the rock world's playing soccer — in the same way, "Preservation" is designed to evoke quite different responses to any other rock album.

When I point out to Ray that the ludicrously righteous, almost medieval hymn, "Shepherds Of The Nation", would not stand up on an "ordinary" album, he says, "But I think it worked."

"Bad" songs are acceptable in a musical. What is important is whether the song expresses its viewpoint succinctly and adheres to its singer's character; the style and content must be appropriate.

Thus a song featuring The Do-Gooders singing *"Down with pornography, Down with lust,"* crass though it may be, can in fact just about be said to work because it is a reasonable caricature of prudishness. On the other hand, to have the Spiv singing *"I am a product of mass-produced factory fodder"* is just hopeless; the same idea could easily have been communicated without The Spiv breaking out of his own persona.

The greatest condemnation of Davies' theatre albums is his slipshod indifference to the rules of his own game. That he should put together such a half-baked set, with such disregard for the integrity of the songs, is maybe indicative of the state of Davies' mind in '73/'74.

After his "retirement" Davies describes himself as "vulnerable . . . I was being used. I wasn't a vegetable. Creatively I was alright but I just couldn't function properly as a person." Maybe he wasn't so creatively alright as he thinks . . . Yet around the same time as he was writing the rubbish on "Preservation II" he was also writing *Starmaker,* so why "Preservation" should have failed so badly is a mystery.

"Schoolboys" 'n' girls

Anyway, to capsulate the "Preservation" plot:

"Act II" starts with Mr. Flash, the wicked landlord, now inexplicably entrenched at the head of an indolent government. But there is dissension in the land, and Mr. Black is awaiting his moment to spring to the head of a populist uprising and seize power: to Flash, money equals power, but Mr. Black knows that moral purity can, in the right circumstances, overthrow lucre.

So the people rise up with Black at their head, and overthrow Flash's government. Flash is captured and taken away to have his mind cleansed, but not before he has realised his wickedness (accompanied by musical flashbacks to the first album). Yes, folks, the evil Flash is now the goodie, while the crusading Mr. Black is revealed as a Hitlerian maniac intent on populating the world with artificially conditioned sheep.

He succeeds.

Sadly, Ray does not. Everything about "Preservation" is trite, unthought-out and cliched: plot, words, music and performance. Both Acts have just been deleted.

AMAZINGLY, RAY RETURNED TO the same barren territory two years later (with "Soap Opera" in between) for "Schoolboys In Disgrace".

I don't think it's just because of the coincidence of the name that Ray's exploration of the schoolboyhood of Mr. Flash seems to parallel in reverse George MacDonald Fraser's series of books fantasising the manhood of Flashman, the schoolboy cad in *Tom Browne's Schooldays*. If Flash were half as entertaining as Flashman, "Preservation" would have been a project worth undertaking.

Musically "Schoolboys" was quite interesting. The first side was predominantly '50s rock-derived — possibly a deliberate reference to Ray's schooldays, as he was born in 1944 — while with a minimum of horn work, the second side showed The Kinks trying out being a rock band again, a skill they took up for real on "Sleepwalker".

But as for the subject matter, well, it doesn't bear thinking about . . .

HOWEVER, AFTER "PRESERVATION" and before "Schoolboys" came "Soap Opera", the one that justified Ray's obsession with musicals. It may not quite have been a masterpiece, but, as I said, it is the only success thus far in the entire genre. As Ray said last week about "You Really Got Me", The Kinks had gotten to the North Pole first again.

A superbly staged TV half hour screened in September 1974, *Starmaker* had Ray co-starring with the excellent June Ritchie and switching from dialogue to brilliant vocals with ease on a clever set in front of an audience — who themselves became extras at the end when Ray joined them to watch the band.

"Soap Opera" also made an amazing live show and a satisfying album.

The plot was perfect. A rock star with a condescending desire to write a song about a "real person" and thus turn him into a star seeks out a little raw material for his research. He knocks on a door at random, and when a dumpy woman called Andrea answers he informs her he's going to take the place of her husband, Norman, for a few days. *"I'm immortalising his life. And I'll even sleep with his wife. For the sake of Art . . ."*

The Star goes about Norman's business, going to bed in pyjamas, getting up at seven for his Cornflakes, cramming into the commuter train, spending all day doing meaningless office work, drowning his sorrows in the pub after work, staggering home through the dehumanised city, dreaming in the tube of a dirty weekend . . .

The one-piece three-piece suit ("Soap Opera").

By the time he gets home he is mesmerised, and in one of his best songs ever, "You Make It All Worthwhile", Ray demonstrates the struggle between the two identities, Norman and The Star, while delivering one of his great "Shangri-La" style put-downs/tributes to suburbia. After a brief fight back by the Star identity, Norman wins out. The hero accepts himself as a face in the crowd . . .

And at this moment Dave steps forward to sing the closer, with Ray seated in the audience on the TV version — a great angry defiant throwback to The Kinks' '60s ferocity, screaming a tribute to the stars of rock. An absolutely autobiographical album, the emotive ending is almost like Dave paying our tribute to Ray for us.

The music was thankfully free of music hall stuff. Sure there were a couple of duff numbers, but most of it was good pop/rock. "Ordinary World" was a superb cod 3/4, Ray vowing to mix with the ordinary people as his latest great sacrifice (cruel self parody); "Rush Hour Blues" was a powerful if overlong culture shock sketch; "Nine To Five" was a dreamy little piece that perfectly captured that feeling of yawning away the afternoon...

"Have Another Drink" sounds like Ray knows what he's talking about (when I asked if he had a drink problem he said, "No, they stop me having more than three drinks"); "Underneath The Neon Sign" is in the "Supersonic Rocketship"/"Sitting In The Midday Sun" classic style glazed intoxication; "Holiday Romance" is a lovely violin strung '20s pastiche, a beautifully subtle Davies performance . . .

"You Make It All Worthwhile" is just tremendous, alternating violent resistance verses with idyllic love-of-suburbia choruses and great bridges of dialogue between Davies and June Ritchie: at one point he rejects her food, she cries, and he relents: *"All right, I'll eat it — and afterwards I'll write a whole verse about your cooking!"* The irony is that it's a whole *song* about her cooking, and it genuinely tugs the heartstrings in the grand manner — one of the most exquisitely melodramatic moments you could ever experience coming in the live show when Andrea says, *"Would you like jam roly poly for afters?"* and The Star graciously resigns himself to the suburban life with *"Darling, let's go and have dinner"*.

Outside of "Sitting In My Hotel", this is certainly Ray's greatest song on RCA, and anyone who dismisses The Kinks' musicals out of hand should go back and take another listen to this and the album it comes from.

"Soap Opera" is actually better than "Sleepwalker", which is being widely touted as a renaissance album; they got to the North Pole first for the second time. Had the achievement of a triple decker TV/stage/record triumph received its just attention this trip could have opened up even more new territory than their '64 conquest.

HAPPILY, RAY DAVIES hasn't lost faith in rock theatre. His output so far may not have been wholly successful, but if anyone can exploit the field to its full — and if you'd seen "Soap Opera" you'd know the potential is huge — then my money's still on Ray.

He says that if he does another rock play it will be outside The Kinks, whatever that means, and with an artistic director. If a director were to send Ray back to the drawing board with his weaker numbers, it would be a bonus indeed.

"I did really think I was

☐ *Continues page 52*

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SINGLES

THE JAM in Paris earlier this year.

SINGLES OF THE WEEK

THE JAM: In The City (Polydor). First release from the New Wave's finest band, The Jam, and the title cut from their soon-to-be-released album, "In The City" is the most convincing British-penned teenage anthem I've heard in a Very Long Time — perhaps since the halcyon days of the 60s. The song shows The Jam to have been influenced by The Who, and the Townshendesque power chords Paul Weller wrenches from his Rickenbacker back up the impression. But that's like saying the Beatles were influenced by early Motown. Everyone has to start somewhere — and the Who never played with quite the same urgency as this, and The Jam are as contemporary as the Callaghan Government.

The music is well played and conceived — and highly commercial, with a bass riff, supplied by Bruce Foxton, holding the song together and lodging it firmly into your consciousness after one hearing. A huge hit and a record those narrow minded reactionaries who control our radio will have to play.

TELEVISION: Marquee Moon (Electra). Over to the American New Wave with the title and greatest track from Television's fine album. Already "Marquee Moon" looks certain to chart in a big way and to encourage progress Electra have pressed the first 25,000 copies on a 12 inch instead of the usual seven inch plastic to enhance the sound quality. Television mastermind Tom Verlaine shows off his full talent as supreme axeman on this lyrically bizarre journey, playing with rare eloquence in a style embracing both knife-edged raunch and stunning lyricism. Moreover, his concept of the structure of a rock 'n' roll song is miraculously simple and original. After listening to this you really feel like you've been somewhere.

ROD STEWART: The First Cut Is The Deepest/I Don't Want To Talk About It (Riva). Technically a double A side, it's Cat Stevens' classic mid-60s British R&B song (from Stewart's solo album "A Night On The Town") which will pick up most plays. And excellent it is too, ranking alongside Stewart's interpretation of the Isley's "This Old Heart Of Mine" as his finest re-working of an old master in the last two years; it's stuff like this which makes me think Stewart is the only rock singer who has it in him to continue recording contemporary material with maximum conviction for the rest of his life. The production and arrangement are exemplary, a gritty well-spaced toughness oozing from every groove as Rod sings this song of insecurity. The guitar solo is great too — a model of construction and almost as memorable as the song's hook. My only beef is, why doesn't Stewart record some bona fide singles instead of always lifting cuts from albums? It's not as if he has to go to the trouble of writing a new song every time.

"I Don't Want To Talk About It", from Atlantic Crossing", is good too — while lacking the spare anguish of the original Crazy Horse version.

GEORGE BENSON: Nature Boy (Warners) In America some black DJs have mistaken this for a Stevie Wonder cut and it's easy to understand why. Careful listening, however, reveals Benson's voice to lack the earthy potency and inventiveness of Wonder's. Still, Benson, a legendary jazz guitarist, has only recently got involved in Hip Easy Listening Soul. It's unlikely Stevie would have gone in for all those romantically melancholy strings that introduce the track, but the overall ambience, with menthol electric piano and emphasis on drums and clavinet, is pure Wonder. A fine record.

GEORGIE FAME: Daylight (Island): A whole slew of goodies this week, and this is another — the first track of any distinction to come out of Fame's lengthy liaison with Island. The Bobby Womack song is insidious and easy-flowing and Fame's performance and arrangement are nigh on irresistable. While this may lack the raunch of his 60's hits —when he was wowing pill popping Mods at the Flamingo — the fairly inventive horn arrangement and his inimitable Hammond beneath it all show he hasn't lost his roots. This should give him his finest hit for a long time.

EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS: I Might Be Lying (Island). In the wake of the Damned and The Jam, The Rods seem rather mundane. Sure, they've carved a niche, but they lack the inspired dementedness of the former and the unselfconscious teenagerdom of the latter — and the ability of both to write a good song. Growing up ain't all cars and sneakers. Even so, "I Might Be Lying" has a backing track that could almost be an out-take from the Stones' "Exile On Main Street", which can't be bad. And the lyric — sort of like "Substitute" but without Townshend's incisiveness or sense of economy, or anything to indicate it was written in the 70s — is good. But the mix is muddy, and ultimately, unlike the Damned and The Jam, the Hot Rods have yet to give any indication of being anything other than a good high energy rock 'n' roll band.

THE KINKS: Sleepwalker (Arista). The title track of The Kink's latest elpee — and while the performance is excellent, the song is on the insubstantial side. If only the rest of the song was as good as its ending, a truly inspired piece of writing and arranging by Ray Davies . . . Still, it's better than most, and Davies' vocals haven't lost any of their edge as he sings a lyric loaded with sexual innuendo that can only add to the Davies enigma.

Hot anthem from the New Wave's finest

BILLY PAUL: Let 'Em In (Philadelphia). Billy Paul has turned Fab Paul's thoroughly inane song into an anthem for love and peace to good effect.

REVIEWED THIS WEEK BY STEVE CLARKE

Instead of Macca's chums and relations coming through the portals, there's Martin Luther King, the Kennedys and (oddly enough) Louis Armstrong. With classy 'Black' sessioners doing the ground work, in Billy's hands the song miraculously loses its tweeness to the point of becoming exuberant, making you realise just what a good melody "Let 'Em In" has. If only John had been in the studio when McCartney cut it . . .

YVONNE ELLIMAN: Hello Stranger (RSO). Not a patch on Barbra Lewis's (she wrote the song) original, but even so I'll be surprised if Ms Elliman doesn't score with this formula disco version. She has an okay if undistinguished voice, fine for singing back-up — as she does with Clapton's band — but not outstanding when handling a song by herself. And here she fails to inject an iota of sexuality into what is a very sexy song.

JIMMY RUFFIN: Fallin' In Love With You (Epic). Oh, How Have The Mighty Fallen, Part 3,001. Toothless so-called funk from the once great Jimmy Ruffin. He deserves better material than this song which has little going for it and is indistinguishable from far too many others of its kind also released this week, most of which merit no further mention.

BONNIE BRAMLETT: Let's Go Let's Go Let's Go (Capricorn). Delaney's estranged wife really blew it when she visited these shores last year as part of the Southern Rock Package headlined by the Marshall Tucker Band. On record, thankfully, she's another story, as those familiar with her last album, "Lady's Choice", should realise. "Let's Go Let's Go Let's Go" is another excellent single from the elpee. But seeing as how its predecessor, the more commercial "Never Gonna Give You Up" on which she dueted with Dobie Grey, failed to get even a nibble of the action, there ain't much hope for this one. A shame, for while Ms Bramlett occasionally goes over the proverbial top on this shuffle, most of the time she sings well and the band play throughout with maximum panache, swinging as only Southern rock musicians can. Great drinking music. Insist that your hip rock 'n' roll local gets it on their juke box right away.

THELMA HOUSTON: Jumping' Jack Flash (ABC). Staying with the ladies, ABC have re-released this gem from eight years ago (my God, is it really that long?) on which Ms Houston lets rip, belting it out with untramelled ferocity. The string arrangement is just plain beautiful.

KIKI DEE: Night Hours (Rocket). And another

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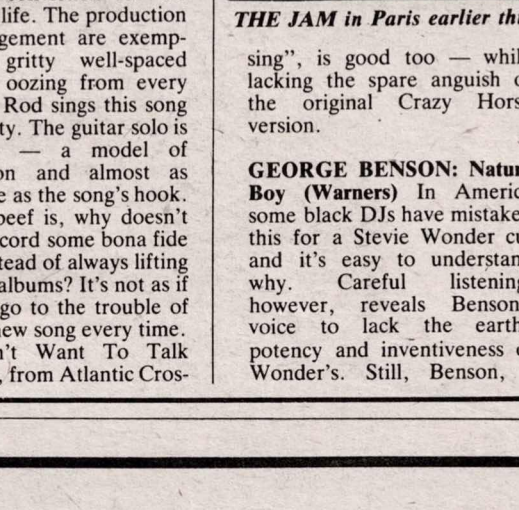

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filly . . . A pretty, predictable and ultimately bland record from the attractive-voiced Kiki Dee. Her own song, it takes a long time to get absolutely nowhere. She needs someone to find her a good song 'cause these kind of ballads that build are a dime a dozen.

BOZ SCAGGS: Lido Shuffle (CBS). The third single from the "Silk Degrees" album, and while the barrel is yet to be scraped, it seems like the cream that was "Lowdown" and "What Can I Say" is all gone. "Lido Shuffle" isn't in the same class. Even so this piece of glossy white funk has a great hook which is bound to sell it.

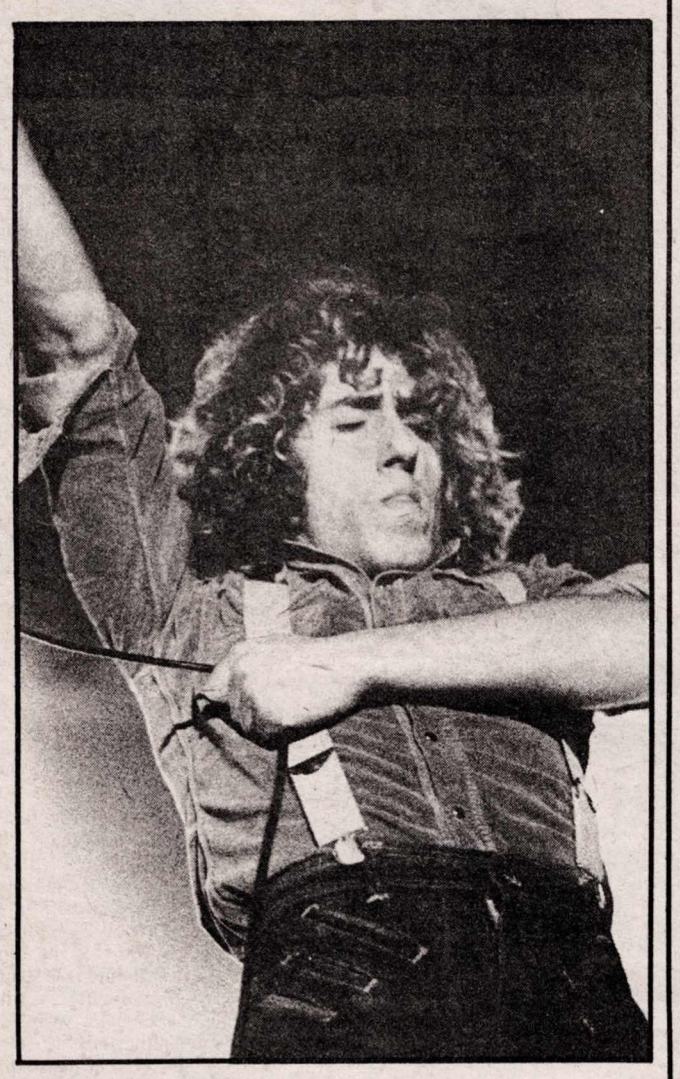
DOBIE GRAY: Find 'Em Fool 'Em & Forget 'Em (Capricorn). Superior disco fodder from the man who wrote 'Drift Away". This one isn't about to win any prizes for being a great song, but the arrangement is inventive in a genre reknowned for its lack of invention. There are also some good chord changes, and Dobie sings this truly cautionary tale (of not to fall in love unless you're really sure) with typical aplomb, as does . . .

WILLIAM BELL: Tryin' To Love Two (Mercury). William Bell, at one time one of the Stax mob, comes up with these little gems every five years or so. Do any of you soul fans remember the great "Eloise (Hang On In There)" on which Steve Cropper really went to town, or his elegy to Otis Redding, "Tribute To a King", which didn't come anywhere near to violating the boundaries of good taste? And then there was always his classic duet with Judy Clay — "Private Number". Well, "Tryin' To Love Two", already a hit in the States, is another fine record from Bell. A ballad, it's like a smoothed out (and not blanded out) Al Green record. Great strings, superlative drumming etc. And contains the immortal couplet *"Jumpin' in and out of bed/Keeps messin' with my head."* He should be so lucky.

FLEETWOOD MAC: Don't Stop (Warners). Odd one, this. In America Warners have gone with the superior "Dreams", an irresistible Stevie Nicks' song, as a follow-up to the great "Go Your Own Way" from the "Rumours" album. If Warners want to consolidate F. Mac's British success, as they obviously do, releasing "Don't Stop", not one of Christine McVie's best songs, isn't the best way to go about it. Even her vocals aren't particularly outstanding.

DAVE EDMUNDS: Ju Ju Man (Swan Song). Louisianna-style rock 'n' roll from home grown boy Dave Edmunds, a first-rate track from his apparently excellent album, "Get It". It's a beautifully played and lovingly produced, with a very full sound replete with cajun accordion (Ry Cooder ain't the only one who can pull it off) and a devastating guitar solo, short and right to the point. Be great to see it in the charts.

THE SAINTS: Erotic Neurotic (Harvest). Phil McNeil of the Ray Davies Tapes informs me that The Saints are the chic-est thing in punk rock. For my money— if this single is anything to go by — they represent the unacceptable face of punk rock. "Erotic Neurotic" is played at a furious rate, the proverbial buzzsaw guitar right upfront. Black Sabbath fans'll love it.



DALTREY for Eurovision . . ?

Stand by for a credibility dent . . .

ROGER DALTREY: Written On The Wind (Polydor). A track from his upcoming solo album in which the Who singer risks a severe credibility dent in order to achieve much commercial success. Really, Daltrey has no business singing this kind of dross, the likes of which can be found festooned all over the Eurovision Song Contest. You wouldn't catch Rod Stewart with a song like this.

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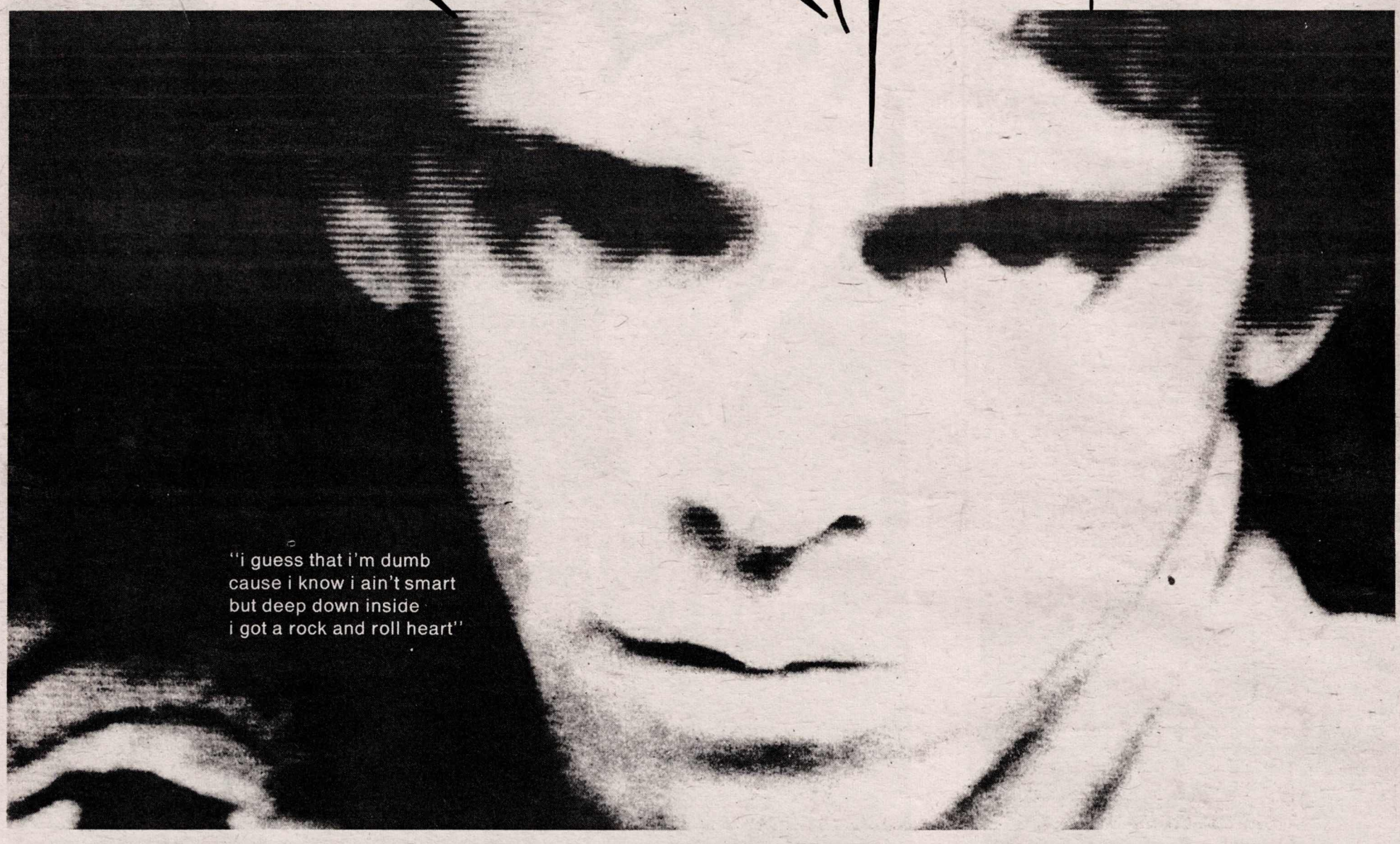

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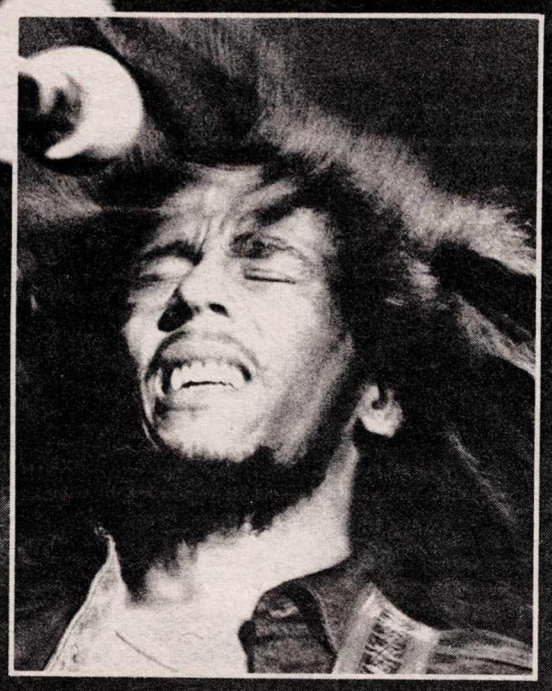
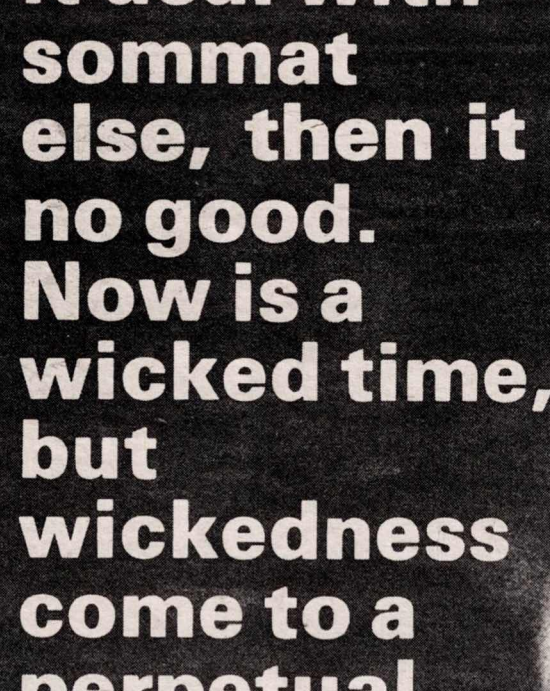


"If politics a deal with prophecy, then good. If it deal with sommat else, then it no good. Now is a wicked time, but wickedness come to a perpetual end. Prophecy a fulfill."



Exclusive words with BOB MARLEY, Natural Mystic

"AAAAHHHHRRRR . . ." Bob Marley gives a yawn of awesome proportions and stretches out on his couch like a giant cat.

With a twitch of the mane he suddenly bursts into song: *"Feel like a jungle lion yeayah,"* he yells, the voice unexpectedly powerful and melodic in the small living room where we're ensconced.

The effect is slightly bizarre, oddly discordant with the surroundings, an echo from another world of records, songs, and concerts.

The public Bob Marley that it recalls — a tortured beseeching figure transfixed in the spotlight stage centre — seems remote from the relaxed affable man sprawled contentedly opposite me in the parlour of a quietly elegant townhouse in Chelsea.

Or maybe "somewhere in England" would be a better description.

The assignment, see, is cloaked in a certain amount of secrecy, and Marley's precise whereabouts at any given time so closely guarded by Island Records HQ that, when dread lensman Dennis Morris and I are finally given the go-ahead for an audience with Bob, he's officially not even in the country.

Since the events of last December 6 — when Marley's Kingston home was attacked by gunmen and he, his wife Rita and manager Don Taylor all wounded — the low profile is doubly understandable.

Unofficially, Marley is in England to confirm arrangements

■ *Continues over*

'Sometime Jah show you thing be go shoot up de place, me have gunshot. And the same thing

■ *From previous page*

for his European tour next month, and to put the final touches to his new album "Exodus".

Even the latter has apparently taken place with the minimum fuss, with Bob shuttling between his temporary Chelsea home and the studio under cover of darkness, working on the night shift . . .

IT WAS on one such shuttle a few weeks back that Bob's cover was unceremoniously blown when Notting Hill Gate police stopped and searched his car in a scene straight from "I Rebel Music" (y'know, *Three o'clock, road block . . .*), except that this time there was no chance to "throw away my little herb stalk" — the search revealed a spliff concealed in Family Man Barrett's sock, and the makings of same in Bob's pocket (Marley was later fined £50 for the offence).

Perhaps surprisingly in view of Marley's continued praise of the herb over the years, it was his first bust.

Mention of the incident brings forth a derisory chuckle.

"The police try to stop me smoke herb because me smoke herb a plenty," he says. He wags an admonishing finger, "Dem go 'Uh, uh, caught you *now*. First time y'get busted, Bob?' Me say, yeah, dem go 'Tut tut . . .' "

He laughs. "Yeah mon, dem claat up me whole night. The moon shine still though."

The bust has evidently troubled Marley little.

In fact, he seems in buoyant mood, fully recovered from the grisly events of last December, and looks composed and relaxed in track-suit trousers, roman sandals, skimpy jumper, and a beret from which strategic locks spring defiantly. When he stretches you can see the cold little bullet scar on the inside of his left arm.

There's a healthy traffic of people through the house, the usual assortment of visitors plus one young outlaw who's obviously just stepped down from the King's Road, festooned in JA outlaw chic, a whole plethora of tricolour badges, shades, zips, leather, locks, and a pair of those peculiar utility/bondage drainpipes they sell down the rough end of King's Road these days; all tags, buckles, pockets and loops.

Bob regards yon outlaw with a bemused eye, a snicker tugging at one corner of his mouth.

"Y'look like a musketeer mon," he laughs. "What y'a deal wit' wi' dem trouser deh? Dem a mountaineering type o'ting or wha'?"

"Rebel trousers," retorts the outlaw.

"Punk pants," sez I.

"Me should have pockets like you last week," jests Bob. "Me have a hundred pockets to go through, der police mus' miss one . . ." He cracks up at the thought.

HE LOOKS younger and fresher than at our last encounter ten months ago when it seemed that Marley's freewheeling temperament was being stretched dangerously taut — not just by the exacting rigours of an extended international tour but by the weightier and less tangible pressures of being the unofficial spokesman for the Rasta faith, for reggae, maybe even for Jamaican culture as a whole — all of which were being discovered by America at least for the first time.

In rock terms, it's the sort of status as cultural figurehead accorded to many but truly deserved by a handful.

Perhaps only Bob Dylan, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Pete Townshend and David Bowie have sustained evolving artistry, charisma, and an effortless rapport with the *zeitgeist* to a similar pitch.

It's that quality, and his unremitting commitment — rather than any collection of sales figures — that has elevated Marley to his present and deserved status as the first Third World superstar. *Check my life if I'm in doubt . . .*

And back home in Jamaica — "Just a big back yard" as Marley tells you — the coldly premeditated attack on his life is proof enough of his importance and standing in a Third World society that one feels may just be discovering its destiny, and which others would evidently like to keep confused.

"I don't really want fe talk about politics," says Marley at the first reference to the "Smile Jamaica" concert that co-incided with Prime Minister Michael Manley's election campaign at the end of last year and which took place two days after and in spite of the attack on him.

"Y'see sometime in these magazines they publish some type o' political t'ings, and when a politician in Jamaica see dat him figure me trying to get power, or someone try to use me to get it, y'know wh'mean?

"Sometimes the way it's stated is not right and it can cause problems . . . because me know like dat the Prime Minister he read an article in *Rolling Stone* which wasn't really nice because it go on too political, like it looked like someone must've used me. So me really no wanna talk about it."

'Politics' seems something of a dirty word in the Marley camp at the moment. "Politricks" murmurs his veteran conga-player Seeko the first time the word raises its head.

Marley sees his beliefs and his message as being outside of the political arena of left and right with its attendant power struggle. The way he sees it, he's not just offering not so much a spiritual alternative as an affirmation of the inevitable, as decreed in The Bible.

"What me say is what the Bible say, but because people don't read the Bible they think what me say is politics, but it's the Bible what have it written."

But surely the "Smile Jamaica" single was in part political?

"I said 'Smile you're *in* Jamaica," corrects Bob. "I didn't say 'Smile Jamaicans, Be a Jamaican'. I don't deal with that, a whole bag o'fuckery dat."

THE FULL title of the new album is "Exodus — Movement Of Jah People".

The movement referred to, says Marley, is a movement "towards Africa, toward Righteousness, and toward Man," and he's writing about it now, "because it happen more in the last coupla months."

He's less than specific about further details.

"Me sees these movements but me can't talk about it because the government no like it. If I talk about it, it look like a political power thing so . . ."

So this movement is happening in Jamaica?

"Even in Jamaica, yeah it start in Jamaica, but it happen here too. It's just poor people, so y'don't hear about it . . . but it happen man." He laughs quietly.

The new album is, he tells me, a departure from "Rastaman Vibration".

"It have different feel, a harder sound, it's more 'up'."

"Rastaman Vibration" was up . . .

"Yeah, but it wasn't like real 'up'. Y'can't really lay back into it."

So you don't like "Rastaman Vibration" so much . . .

"Not really. I mean, yeah, me like it, I respect the idea, but it wouldn't be my favourite."

Which would?

"Me like how all the albums come," he says, indicating a building motion with his hand, "the sequence".

Of that remarkable sequence that Marley and The Wailers have unleashed on the murky awaiting Seventies — extending back through "Rastaman Vibration", "Live", "Natty Dread", "Burning", and the epochal "Catch A Fire", even to his pre-Island work with Lee Perry on "Rasta Revolution" and "African Herbsman" — "Vibration" remains for me the weak link in the evolutionary chain.

Its faulty running-order aside, it seemed to lead into dangerously ambiguous territory, the ferocious landscape of its forerunners too often ignored for tamer territory.

It was Marley's big breakthrough Stateside, going top ten on the US charts with the single "Roots Rock Reggae" following suit, but the murmur down among Bob's roots audience was less enthusiastic, the album's performance here disappointing.

Bob knows "Exodus" is an important album for him, that he has to please a lot of people. "The mix takes a long time," he says, "got to have something nice for this one."

In any case, the ten tracks on the new album represent only a fraction of the material that's been committed to tape in recent months.

"Gotta whole heap o' stuff recorded, about five albums now."

The material apparently includes previously recorded tracks, creations from several years back that have only now found their way onto tape, and songs written in the past few months, in England and Nassau.

IT'S THE SAME mixture that makes up "Exodus", which I later hear in its entirety, or at least a rough mix of what will be in the shops next month.

It's immediately apparent that it's a remarkable record, that it has exactly the kind of overall impact and cohesion that was so sorely missing from the lush but unresolved gestures of "Rastaman Vibration", and that its finest moments equal the peaks reached on "Catch A Fire" and "Natty Dread".

It's that good.

To describe it as a radical departure from its predecessors would be misleading — it's more a refinement and progression — but it's certainly the most overtly *structured* of any Wailers album, side two being given over completely to romantic love songs, with side one signalling a return to the stark angry beauty of rebel classics like "Burning And Looting", and "Talking Blues".

Undoubtedly some of its songs refer directly to Marley's experiences last December.

In effect the two sides reflect the two main strains of Marley's music, of reggae as a whole: the melodic, smooth, love song tradition, and the wider social/spiritual view.

on "Don't Worry Bout A Thing" (or so I guess the title) with Bob exulting about the rising sun and the "three little birds beside my doorstep" with relevant soundtrack. Personally I find both this and the single "Waiting Day" the least compelling tracks here, but I've no doubt the low-key sweetness of the latter, together with its George Benson-styled guitar frills and simple tired-of-waiting-for-you lyrics, will find favour with FM airplay and Radio One producers alike.

The opener "Jamming" is maybe the side's strongest track, another "Lively Up Yourself" that is both sexual exhortation *("I wanna jam it with you")* and wider celebration of life *("Love cannot be bought or sold/Life is worth much more than gold")* strung over a pithy, effortlessly catchy tune.

The side closes with a redraughting of the old Wailers classic "One Love", recorded for Coxsone way back in '65 or so, and losing nothing in the retelling here, its ska beat slowed and beefed up, and the lyric shifted up to date *("Let's join together to fight this holy Armageddion").*

IT'S SIDE ONE though that provides the real awaited-for goods and the real clues to Marley's current stance. A slow,

Interview: NEIL SPENCER

It seems almost certain that commercially it will be Marley's most successful album yet.

The best perspective I can put on side two is that it's Marley's "Nashville Skyline". It has the same sweetness and light that informed "Vibration" but with an underlying resilience and ease that the latter lacked.

On "Good Loving", for example, we're into heavy duty "Lay Lady Lay" country: *"Turn your light down low/And unhook your window curtain/Let Jah moon come shining in/Into our lives again"* croons Marley over a slow, sparse backing with the I Three singing soul responses in gorgeous invocation to love.

The soft rural mood is maintained

efore they happen. Like before dem e a dream say me hear plenty g happen — vision, yeah!'

sensuous bluesy guitar sets the atmosphere perfectly before Bob's haunting vocal drifts into focus: "There's a natural mystic floating through the air . . ."

The mood is epochal, as are the lyrics:

"This could be the first trumpet/Might as well be the last/Many more will have to suffer, many more will have to die/Don't ask me why."

It's a song written several years ago and only recorded "now the time is right".

Its mood is maintained in the torture and anguish of both "Heathen" and "Guilty", the first a rumbling call to arms *("Rise up all you fallen fighters/Rise and make your stand again")*, the second a direct indictment of those who "would do anything to materialise their every wish" — the guilty ones. Say no more.

The sprightliness of "So Much To Say" would seem to offer some relief from the intensity of the mood, but even this is a vivid call-to-arms which suddenly springs into an incredible double-time chant by Bob that couldn't be more specific:

"I and I no come to fight flesh and blood, but while they try and fight you down stand firm and give Jah thanks and praises . . . I don't expect to be judged by the laws of men . . ."

With the final (title) track, the side moves into overdrive on a pounding, funk-influenced finale that has Marley yelling *"Take some time and look within/Are you satisfied with the life you're living"* over the repeated chorus line — a natural for a live finale in the same way "War" proved to be.

There's an overall feeling of victory to the first side that sets the sweetness and occasional whimsey of side two in an altogether grander perspective than simple songs of romance usually accorded. It adds up to an understanding of the joys and battles of life presented with a rare and classic simplicity of form such as in rock terms has only the likes of Dylan of "Blood On The Tracks" or "Wesley Harding" has previously managed.

Photographs: DENNIS MORRIS

THE SAME GRAND perspective, where the small events of life ring with greater resonance, is present in Marley's character as a whole, and as usual the interview ranges between tones of deep seriousness and hooting mirth.

In fact, there's moments which are downright whacky; at one point, for example, after I'd mentioned the lunar eclipse that was to happen the following week, Marley casually expresses his desire to go to and live on another planet; "The same as earth but a different planet. Like f'rinstance, me might call Africa a different planet," he says. The idea seems to appeal to Seeko, who's sitting in on the conversation, and who immediately starts cracking up. "Yeah, them up there somewhere man," he says in an amazingly thick Jamaican rural accent. "Having fun."

Later too, Bob gets to hear about the development of punk rock from photographer Dennis Morris, who evidently isn't exactly bowled over by the movement. As Dennis gets to the pogo-dancing, Bob explodes. "Bloodclaaat," he laughs. "Dem mus' tek a different kind o'dope or sommat!"

Dennis goes onto the glue-sniffing and safety pins through the cheek; "Madmen!" says Bob incredulously.

"Dem go in a madhouse in Jamaica y'know."

And while we're on media sensations how about the tabloid press' sudden interest in Bob since they discovered that Miss World was, like, a special friend of his. There were, after all better reasons for giving Marley coverage.

Bob laughs. "Yeah, y'can just imagine with those people, they can't see that *something a really go on.* If me just release a record they wouldn't put me on the front cover so, but Miss World business and, brupp, front cover! So what really happen? Scandal Mirror, you try to show me up, huh," he concludes abruptly.

I think what wigged 'em out the most was the "nine kids by as many different women" angle, I say.

"And God say Jospeh shall be blessed with many children'," says Bob simply, referring to his belonging to the tribe of Joseph, of the Twelve Tribes of Israel that are outlined in the Old Testament.

The *Daily Mirror's* "Wild Man of Reggae" spins a football between his feet and stares out at the blustery day. He hasn't, he tells me, been getting much practice. "The weather too cold and the park too far away. I'd like to have a house right in front of the park, convenient . . . ."

Didn't he get restless being indoors all the time? No because he exercises regular; "If you didn't exercise in England when it rains then you wouldn't get much exercise at all," he says. He's not a great fan of the British climate.

The vibrancy and humour that Bob constantly brings to play in conversation alternate with flights of arcing eloquence and moments of deep seriousness. Pervading everything is the air of a man who has a direct line to the life force — "love life and live it," as the Rastas frame it — and who's deeply curious about life, about people, about his God, "what really go on", which is a phrase that comes up often.

We return to the subject of "Exodus". I ask whether the 'movement' it describes is something Bob's noticed on his international travels. "Yeah but I haven't been many places really, just England, America, Germany . . . . me no' bin t'Japan, China, Brazil . . . ."

You wanna go to those places?

"Yeah, me concentrate next on the Dutch-speaking colonies," says Marley with a straight face. He chuckles, "Yeah mon, patois French, dem raas deh . . .

"Me no really go too far yet," he continues "but I'm going to Africa soon. But there's so much trouble a go through the world . . ."

The world seems to be closing up fast, I say. Countries closing borders . . .

"Yeah now is a wicked time, but wickedness come to a perpetual end, and the righteous can judge, and see how to mek it and set it right. It's not that we do a thing, it's just what the Bible say happen. It's just tradition — y'know, like I ever a Man."

Is the album trying to tell people how to live?

"Can't tell anybody how to live, so everyone have to find out how *them* wanna live. For God create the earth and everyone as an equal being, so any life them wanna live them have to live it. It's like the Bible say, 'let the wicked be wicked and the good be good.'

"Everything that God said in the prophecies have to come true, it's just that some people are more aware of it, more aware of the spiritual part of life."

But if when you pursue righteousness sometimes you come up against the political system, I say.

"Then people see that system is the devil."

But if you want to change that system . . .

"Y'can't change the system, the people have to change the system, because the same system that goes on is put into power by the people."

Marley tries to summarise his attitude:

"If politics a deal with prophecy, then good. If it a deal with just . . . . sommat else, then it's no good, because man must know that whatever God say must come true. Prophecy a fulfil. If people are talking about the right things, about God, then they shouldn't use politics to stop them people talking. What politics is then . . . . there's something heavy behind that, it's not just politics, but a whole heap of fuckery."

"Babylon no wan' peace mon, Babylon want power. The Devil no want peace, he want power and that's why him always a fight.

"It's like the devil always come inbetween politicians and they start quarrelling. Y'have to imagine what really go on, because power become a pride business instead of we live together and trade together and stop the war . . .

"For God no love war, and we make the moon and star shine, and the climate to get better, because people cause everything — God's people do it, Mankind — and then we have plenty of wheat and corn and mankind just cool, cool upon the earth."

THERE'S A CERTAIN drama in Marley's recitation of his pastoral vision that cold print cannot do justice, just as there's an evident feel for, and love of, the country at work on certain tracks of "Exodus", and which in the past has been evident on the likes of "Hallelujah Time".

Marley and the Wailers may be billed as 'The Trenchtown Experience', but Marley's childhood was spent not in Kingston but on a farm in St. Annes with his mother (who now lives in the States). Or rather, he "grew up in farming", meaning he's an accomplished hand at such noble rural arts as the milking of cows, goats, the riding of donkeys, horses, the rearing of fowls (of which he seems especially fond), and — importantly — the growing of food.

"Me love farming," says Bob. "Me wanna live 'pon a farm later. Me no really wanna live in a flat and go to a club every night and come back, and then do it again. If you're in the country at night . . . . when the rain fall at night it's the best y'know, because all y'hear is the rain play music on the leaves, like 'Rrrrrrrrrr'. Yeah, that life is sweet. Y'can tell before the rain comes because the fowl get excited and hile up dem feather . . . ."

In fact, Bob gets quite carried away on the joys of country living, and the joys of home grown food — maybe the cold English spring snap is getting to him I think. He used to hunt birds with a sling-shot when he was a kid, he tells me, they were good eating. The birds these days though, "them look like a fertilised type o'bird, y'know, *unnatural,* like something funny a go on."

Again the contrast to the public persona is striking. Marley shakes his head and laughs as he recalls it; "Me love the place. It set 'pon a hill . . . ."

Did the young country boy Bob Marley ever expect to be so popular when he was older I ask.

"Expect? No."

Forsee perhaps?

"Well to tell you the truth," starts Marley, his voice dropping, "me kinda see a vision like, me kinda sight it. Sometime Jah show you things before they happen. That's what happen before dem go shoot the place up — me have a dream where me hear plenty gunshot, and then the same thing happen. A vision yeah."

Did he flash on the vision as the attack started?

"Yeah, it was a lucky thing. Me just stand upon the place."

What were your feelings at the time?

"I can't *tell* you. I wasn't even *there.* There was a struggle and then me didn't know wha' happen (pause). But I'll tell you, during the time it happen, a real *mystic* a come in . . . funny . . . Jah guide I and protect."

So did the five gunmen involved ever get caught, or did they just disappear into the night?

"Yeah . . . . so dem say. I know dem couldn't shoot the Prime Minister and just disappear though" (He gives a low chuckle). "But it's alright, me no wan 'em found now."

NEXT MONTH Marley and the Wailers begin another full-scale summer tour that will include Britain as well as taking in Italy and Scandinavia for the first time. A plan to play Lagos, Nigeria, fell through he tells me, but he still plans a visit to Africa when the time is right.

One speculation I heard was that the extraordinary amount of material in the can will enable Marley to "disappear" for a lengthy period of time should he decide to. That he is A Man With A Destiny is an impression given both by him and those who surround him.

"Everything Bob writes or says comes true," one of his Rasta compatriots informs me. "It's like the vibrations of the time are so sensitive. Now is an important time for the world."

'I was threatened by a cowboy's

THE FIRST thing I see when I get off the train is cowboys.

Spry, bright-eyed and obnoxious, they whoop and prance on the Wembley Park platform. Wide-eyed I survey them, and follow them meekly to the slaughter as Balthazar once followed a star.

A queer in a brothel? A fish up a tree? I am sure out of my element at the Ninth Wembley Country Festival, and the fact that the cowboys are in reality mechanics from Balham leaves me feeling no less like Joe Goebbels at a Bar Mitzvah.

Inside the Empire Pool I wander around squinting at the various monotonous stalls. Record companies vie pettily, attempting to outdo each other with repeated sten-gun blasts of Appalachian vibrato/Nashville twang at a deafening volume, the walls of sound colliding to cancel each other out. For although now united in a cause, let us not forget that these are separate record companies, and as such dedicated to the obliteration of all others.

Southern Comfort T Shirts and other Efnik Regalia are touted shamelessly. I stop to stare at a cowboy with the biggest pair of spurs I've ever

BILLIE-JOE SPEARS

seen, and am physically threatened by his equally large girlfriend.

There is a lot of denim around (often with "Elvis" appliqued on it) and lots of assumed Texan drawls which rapidly dismantle at the merest hint of disbelief. The crowds are more well-fed than well-bred, and provincial accents outnumber metropolitan ones ten to one, proving once more that the children of the capital are definitely smarter than us outsiders.

There are a distressing number of people in wheelchairs and a depressing number of plain people — none of the weird and beautiful young things who infest new-wave gigs. In fact, there is an amazing lack of youth present; the only kids I can see are real wimps in parkas who probably dig country music because it's the only available art form as grossly klutz as they are.

I mean, how many ace faces in your school wanna grow up to be like Conway Twitty, J J Barrie or Jim And Jesse And The Virginia Boys?

After surveying the general air of joyless awe which pervades the place like ether in a mausoleum, I go outside and hang around the spiv programme sellers — who really have these guileless country folk sussed; they yell "Closing now! Last chance to buy a programme!" for around six hours, rebuking me in no uncertain Cockney when I come by from time to time to check them out.

Saturday night offered such moribund delights as The Cotton Mill Boys, the great Carl Perkins (neatly tucked away as befits a rock and roll turncoat) and married at 14, pregnant at 15 Loretta Lynn, who despite (or peut-etre of) her foolhardy flirtation with feminism, poured unexpurgated golden syrup all over the Saturday night stalwarts.

In the Whitehall Rooms, United Artists play host to the alcoholic foibles of the en masse media. Everyone shakes hands frantically as though attempting to transmit a deadly

CRYSTAL GAYLE

disease. We nibble the buffet and lick our lips in anticipation of Billie Jo Spears (who has the hits) and Crystal Gayle (who has the tits.)

What we get, however, is the alluring promise of Miss Jean Shepard, your standard lacquer and rhinestones Nixon hausfrau life-size model. Miss Shepard spent the previous day touting for business at the United Artists record stall, and so was rather tired on Sunday — though not too tired to deliver a for-the-benefit-of-the-BBC harangue against dirty lowdown rock and roll devil music.

Assorted United Artists publicists assure us and each other in loud voices how "lovely" Miss Shepard is; "She's lovely!" "Yes, lovely!" "Quite lovely!" Your reporter smirks, having heard it all before.

Miss Shepard has been instructed by United Artists not to sign autographs for fear she might further exhaust herself. The effervescent lady, however, has paid no heed, and we are informed that she is upstairs surrounded by admirers.

"That's good, because she sure as hell won't be surrounded by the press", murmurs someone.

I listen to Kenny Rogers sing the haunting "Lucille" for the 48th time, and think about tonight. I don't want to stay. The only person I reckon I could sit through without nodding out would be Don Williams and he's not on till last. Across in the deserted stadium he plays his guitar relentlessly while we sit around being amiable.

At the bar, the radio people bitch. "The concerts get less and less interesting each year. But these people just keep on coming. Last year there were about 600 people queueing at 10 in the morning."

"Must be mad."

"Must be."

I talk to Fred Dellar, who has been talking to Don Everly, who is fat and drinking and hates Phil. At the bar the PRs whine on: "Lack of free-

HANK THOMPSON

dom is the price they pay for laughing their way to the bank every day."

"Gibson never needs to work more than 70 days a year."

Jean Shepard eventually hauls her ass through the door. An amiable lady, with hair, as the boy from UA whispers ungallantly in my ear, like a huge white woolly tea cozy.

Despite her unfortunate coiffure, Miss Shepard is as sweet a person as one could hope to meet nowadays, admitting membership to a clan called A.C.E. (Association of Country Entertainers) whose sole aim in life is to obliterate the rock and roll taint from pure old country blood.

I mention to the lady next to me that it would be fun to form a club called Kill Off Country

'I was wiped out by Johnny

EMMYLOU HARRIS, the queen of the hop . . .

Three views of the Ninth Annual Country Festival, held at Wembley over the Easter weekend. Above: the sophisticated view of youth . . . And below, the views of, errr . . . older people. By ***JULIE BURCHILL, FRED DELLAR, DAVID REDSHAW***

SATURDAY, SUNDAY

"YAH-HOO!" yelled my country cousin as 51-year-old fiddler Johnny Gimble put on his personal Texas dance party and nearly stole the Sunday show from under the very hat of Don Williams.

There had been little to celebrate during the previous night.

Conway Twitty had failed to materialise while Loretta Lynn, first lady of Nashville, practically abdicated onstage. Possibly the most elegantly dressed bore in town, Loretta gave little and lost a lot, while many of her supporting cast did little to distinguish themselves either — the exceptions being The Oak Ridge Boys, Carl Perkins and, to a lesser extent, Canuck new star Carroll Baker.

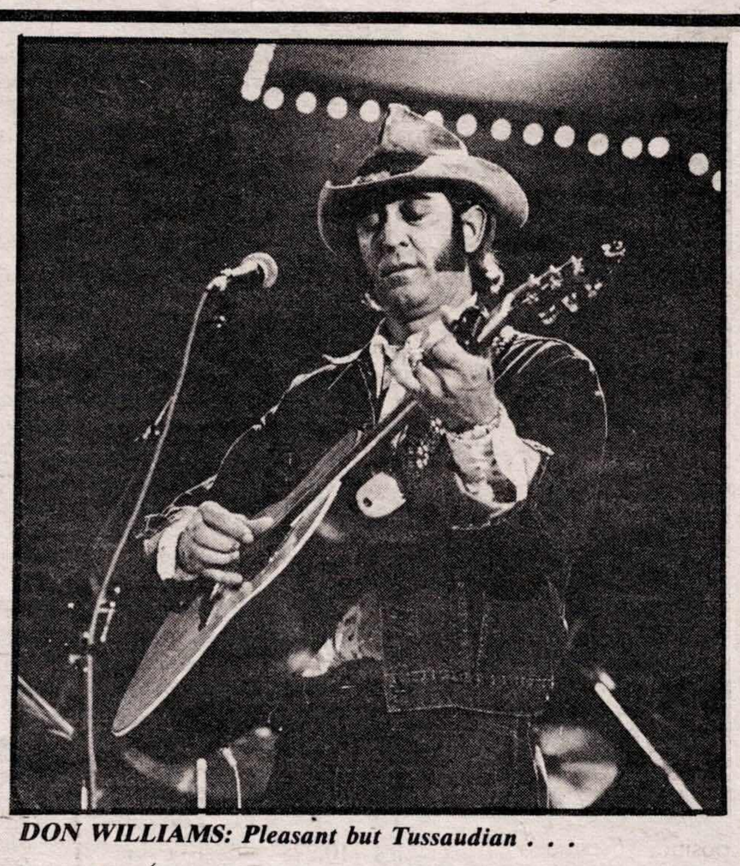
Jody Miller, a sequin queen in search of a roll-on, was Vegas-slick, full of git-it-on vitality and professional — but made little impression. Tommy Overstreet, taking a tougher line than in the past and heading due west towards Waylon country, displayed possibilities but didn't quite get his name on the Wanted poster, despite his outlaw attire and fairly gritty posse of a band.

Meanwhile, the appearance of Don Gibson, never an outstanding stage performer, merely served as a reminder that he was — and still is — one of Music City's classiest songwriters.

Thankfully, the Oaks, four young hip harmonists who are the latest in a line of Oak Ridge vocal squads stretching back to 1957, hot-gospelled it via a line of vocal sounds and stagecraft that made most of Mervyn Conn's Saturday signings seem like non-starters. Replete with a honey-bear of a stand-up pianist who played like the good guys' answer to Jerry Lee and endowed with a bass singer whose voice could sink subs at 600 fathoms, the Oaks did their whole down-homey, mitt-clapping, foot-stomping, good-time music bit — and listening didn't hurt, though hands became sore through applauding or merely just joining in.

Add some potent boppin' on a selection of oldies but goodies by Carl Perkins — who said more about the connection between Hank Williams and the roots of rock with his rendition of "Kaw - Liga" than could be found in a handful of textbooks — and you have the sum total of Saturday's memorable moments.

But Sunday was a whole new can of pork and beans. Johnny Gimble, as I previously stated, resurrected the Bob Wills sound almost single-handed (to be factual he did have ace Nashville steelman Lloyd Green trading riffs while the Frank Jennings Syndicate did their best to live with the ageing fireball).



DON WILLIAMS: Pleasant but Tussaudian . . .

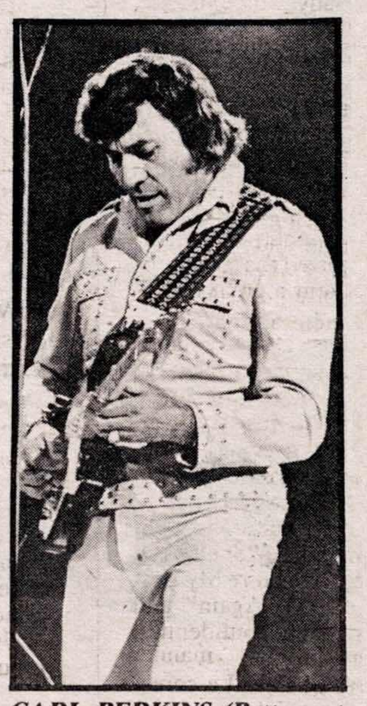
Jean Shepard, who celebrates her own silver jubilee in country music this year, also impressed as one of the festival's most authoritative performers by singing in a style that would have sent 'em reeling round the Ryman at the Opry of '50s.

A gutsy lady in Kitty Wells tradition, she proffered a fine line in bar-room ballads and warm honky-tonk, her performance only being marred by a speech on behalf of ACE (an association devoted to keeping country music from going pop) in which Jean declared that Glen Campbell, John Denver and Mac Davis were not to be considered as country performers and such acceptance would prove the end of true country music.

"If you kill the roots, the tree will die," she opined, adding, "Our tree is already starting to wither."

When the British CMA awards were announced later that evening, she must have been dead chuffed to learn that The Statler Brothers had beaten The Eagles in the "Best Country Group" category. So much for hit records!

Apart from the Mercey Brothers, a Canadian outfit who sounded totally British, the rest of the bill were generally admirable. Hank Thompson, who came on in almost



CARL PERKINS (Better not let Jean hear ya, pal)

Pix: CHALKIE DAVIES, MURRAY CLOSE

chick'. . .

— a.k.a. K.O.C. — and receive a stony stare as reply. The lady is a Country Fan and Not Amused.

Her husband also is a Country Fan, with the added kudos of a Radio Show. He doesn't like leather jackets, it seems.

"From the *NME*, eh?"

I nod in mute anguish.

"For every pop record that's sold there's TWO country records. Don't forget that! TWO."

I nod in silent shame and surreptitiously flick a sticky piece of potato salad onto his shiny black plastic shoe.

Those Country Fans without Radio Shows, however, are pleasant enough people. I sit down with a couple from the West Country, maybe about half a century old each, and try to understand.

"Country people sing about their lives on the farm . . . they sing about life as it is. It all comes straight from the heart."

"They grow up in the country," the lady's husband explains to me. "They know life in the raw. They aren't in it for the money."

Didja come here last night?

"Yes. It was a bit too loud."

Do you come here often?

"We've been coming for six years."

"If I was on my deathbed I would rise to see Slim Whitman," says Mrs Country Fan. "The country people are the most sincere you could hope to meet. Once they take an artist to their hearts they stay there forevermore."

MICKEY NEWBURY

"We'd follow Slim anywhere."

Don't you ever feel you're being taken for a ride?

"Oh no, dear. It's given us a purpose in life. It keeps us together. We were going to go out to South Africa. But we decided to follow Slim instead."

The lady smiles. The media drinks. Jean smiles at people in the same manner as she smiles at chairs and other inanimate objects. I wonder.

Will Emmylou bring truth to Wembley?

Do corpses walk?

JULIE BURCHILL

JOHNNY GIMBLE (right) with Lloyd Green on steel

Gimble. . .'

JEAN SHEPARD: 'Th' only good rocker is a dead rocker. . .'

warm-up position, sounded much the same as he did back in the early '50s, and Jim and Jesse McReynolds' excellent bluegrass band brought a "better than Bill Monroe" comment from country cousin.

Billie Jo Spears proved to be a torchy lady, though she didn't venture her new blues-hued version of "Heartbreak Hotel", mainly playing safe and sticking to known winners like "Misty Blue" and "Blanket On The Ground". And though the Irish group headed by Ray Lynam and Philomena Begley was kinda K-Tel, it must be reported that the audience gave them a great reception.

But it was Don Williams they'd really come to root for. It was apparent from the onset that if he'd had just come on and played yo-yo a la Roy Acuff, the fans would have all died happy. But when he stepped up to the mike and delivered "Amanda", "Shelter Of Your Arms", "You're My Best Friend", "Say It Again" and other hits in his confidential, whisper-in-your-ear manner it was sheer Shangri-La-come-Sunday, most of promoter Conn's 10,275 ticket-buying punters going totally bananas in consequence.

But, though I'll readily admit that the ex-Pozo Seco man has come up with an identifiable sound and that he, David Williamson (bass and vocals) and Danny Flowers (a highly capable guitarist and vocalist) are exceedingly pleasant in small doses, my own belief is that Williams is so Tussaudian in his approach to live shows that one is probably better off listening to his albums.

Sorry about that, Eric.

FRED DELLAR

EMMYLOU HARRIS'S decision to operate from within a virtual cocoon on the third day, was an unqualified success.

The sound system which t reached some parts of Wembley Pool but not others ... the idea of being one more circus act in a rather moderate country festival (her manager says no more Wembleys for Emmy) ... Understandably the Harris entourage decided to go it

■ *Continues over page*

Come to where the music is.
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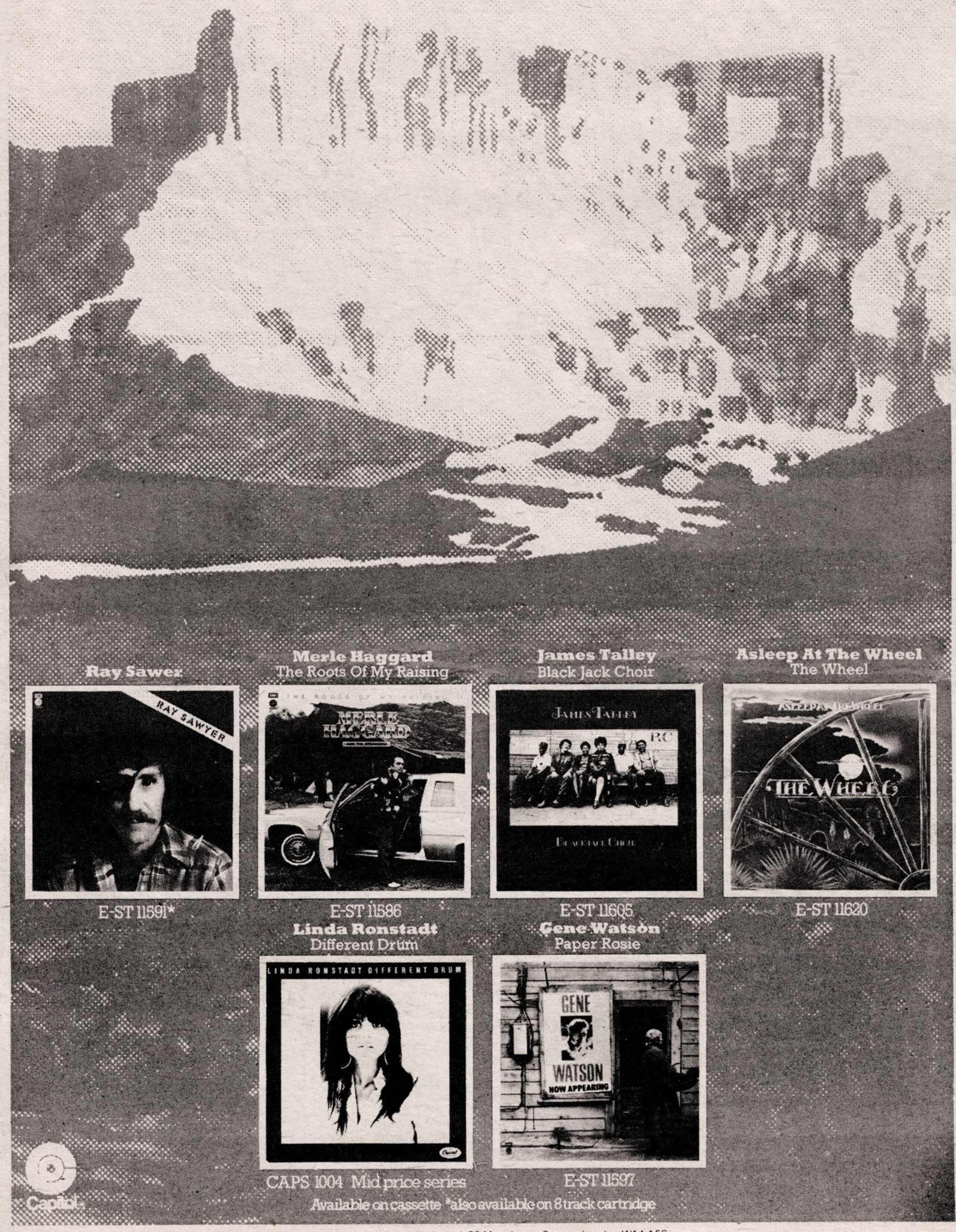


Marketed by EMI Records Limited, 20 Manchester Square, London W1A 1ES.

COUNTRY FESTIVAL

■ *From previous page.*

alone, and her eventual triumphant performance banged home the good sense of that decision.

Rock acts manage to balance Wembley Pool for sound but country performers (easy-going by tradition) are early in life imbued with the propaganda about going on and doing their bit for country music, regardless of the venues — which in Nashville takes in that horrendous behemoth the Municipal Auditorium, where you need opera glasses to see and the musicians are sandwiched between radio commercials. Acceptance of these hazards is part of a good ol' boy's upbringing, like beating off alligators with an oar.

Rock musicians take time and money to get it right and that is just one of the reasons why the younger stars of Country are increasingly identifying with rock.

Mickey Newbury and Larry Gatlin, both young good ol' boys if you see what I mean, are struggling for British acceptance and decided to pitch in regardless.

Newbury's voice was everything we've come to recognise from his records — high, tremulous, and sentimental, rolling ever onward like a Mississippi steamboat past an unfolding emotional landscape of cotton, good ol' niggers and good ol' slavemasters.

No, that's not fair. Newbury's songs represent the new South; optimism and sentimentality bound up now and for ever more. In a small club he'd probably be modestly gripping, but at Wembley "American Trilogy" floated away to the roof, impact-wise, like cotton on a Southern breeze.

Larry Gatlin, also of the singer / songwriter genre, open of face and telling us "We're not exactly showbiz, we don't have 84 dancing girls", played an even, uneventful set and like Newbury left you wanting to see him in more congenial circumstances since many of the songs he sings are gems of the nouveau country genre.

Crystal Gayle was the unexpected starlet that Wembley does often throw up. Her voice was more soulful than even her records suggest; she makes albums in a semi-smooth, Nashville vein with the help of Don Williams' producer Allen Reynolds, currently the flavour of the month in Music City, and all the echoing, trebly sound in the world couldn't disguise her promise.

Don Everly, like Carl Perkins the previous Saturday, spliced in some rock'n'roll and scored a pay-out. Assisted by Albert Lee on guitar and harmony he proved that "So Sad" and "Cathy's Clown" are still more popular than his new material from the "Brother Jukebox" album. Lairy in denims, black curls and confederate scarf, Everly was on of the festival successes.

I thought The Dillards played a much better set when they appeared on this very day the previous year. They concentrated this time on their rock-influenced material rather than on the pure-as-mountain-dew bluegrass for which they are known and I calculated that maybe they reduced their effect by about a third as a result.

They were enjoyable enough, and have a ready line in deliberately homespun stories between numbers, but I just didn't get off on them like last year.

I came prepared to write off Emmylou's performance as one more festival casualty but she turned in one of her strongest performances yet.

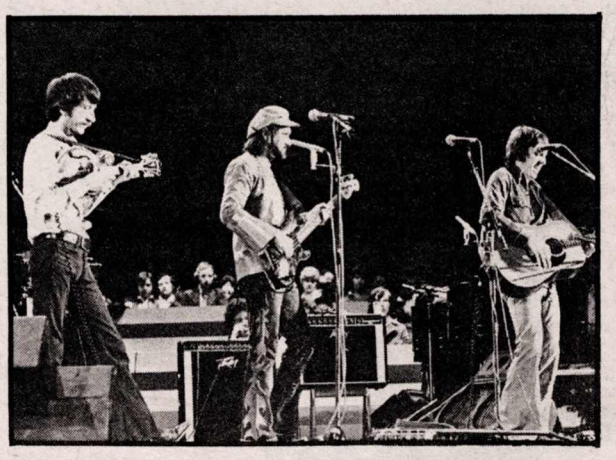
She cleared the photographer's pit of TV cameras, had her own sound system (Europa) set up and was given a full sound check.

The result was readily apparent, a full, gutsy sound, and the audience reacted to a performer who knew what was expected and was prepared to give it. It was a gust of cool, professional West coast air in a sleepy, torpid, Southern festival.

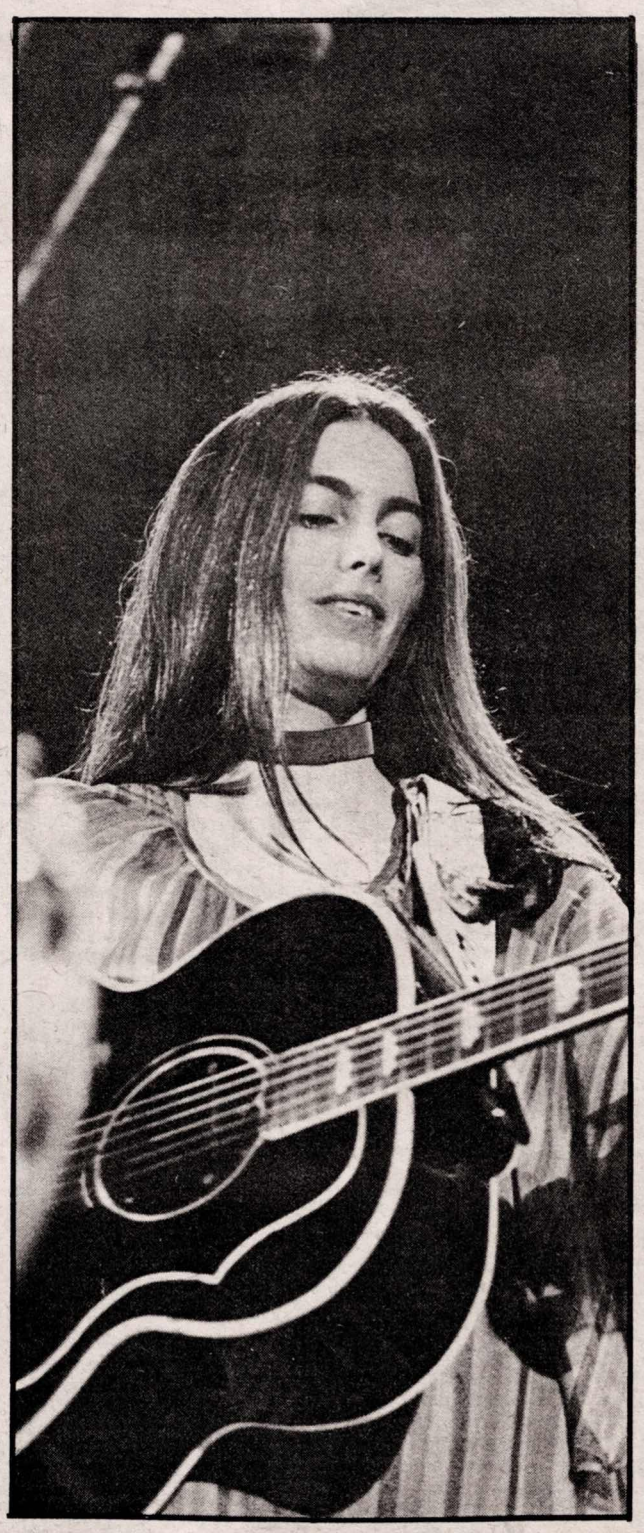
Albert Lee, ex-Chris Farlowe, ex-Heads Hand and Feet, had replaced James Burton on lead guitar and he proved a modest delight, being more rough-hewn than Burton but perhaps better suited to the surroundings — particularly since Emmy rocked things up considerably near the end, enough to have Jailhouse John of the Wild Wax Show bopping in the front and troubling the ever-officious bouncers.

Like a thoroughbred football team, Emmylou can absorb late-season substitutes and carry on grooving. This time she debuted "Luxury Liner" "Poncho And Lefty" from the latest album. Luxury Liner she was too. Forty tons of country-rock steel with none of the predictability that I'd feared and closing Wembley 1977 in the style it had lacked all along.

DAVID REDSHAW



THE DILLARDS: Good, but better last year?



EMMYLOU HARRIS: closing with style...

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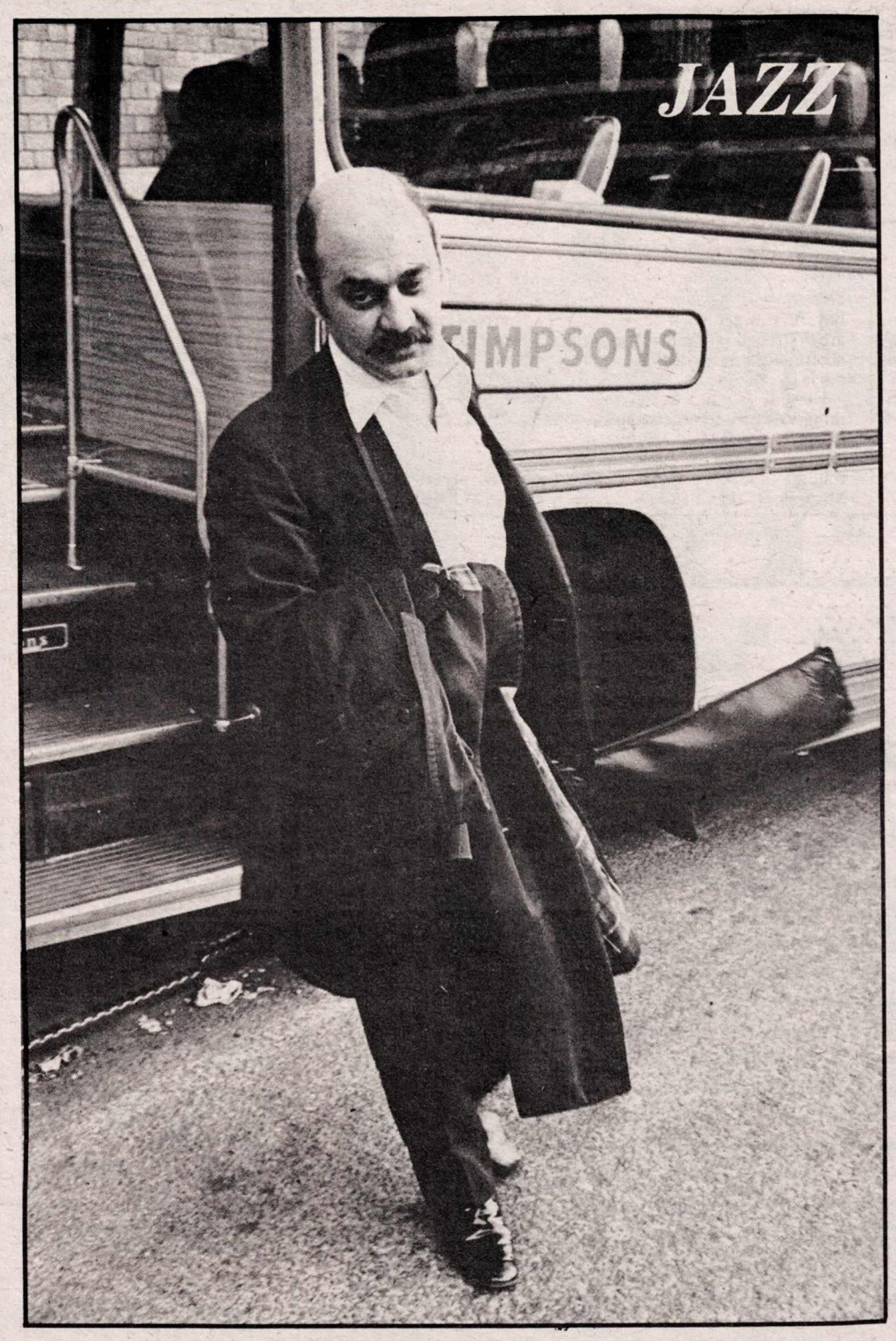


Pic: VALERIE WILMER

Guitarist ***Joe Pass,*** *sitting-down jazz variety, is packing them in at last.* ***BRIAN CASE*** *tells the story*

THESE DAYS, Joe Pass commands the kind of hush that used to come with butlers. A huge hedge of punters leans forward in the gloaming as if awaiting an order from the man in the spotlight, starboard ears respectfully inclined, small smiles signalling inner felicities.

And Joe, from the look of him, bald head rocking back and forth, one leg raised, thicketty tweed jacket, old suitcase-strap of a belt, chomping and mumbling at his blunt moustache as he pours all his ecstatic and lyrical swoon out through the eye of a needle, would order up a stein of the foaming like any drop-forge foundryman rather than the crystal stemmed whistle-wetter of the solo recitalist.

His square fingers slip up and down the Gibson and it's so quiet in Ronnie's you can hear his fingerprints on the chords as he harvests the last of Erroll Garner's "Misty".

Wild applause.

"Thank you," says Joe, and examines his guitar. "They told me it came tuned from the factory," he says, shaking his head. Laughter. He has a good natural stage manner, self-deprecating, popping the previous bubble that gathers around the low decibel range of solo artistry.

"You can get a manual of 10 thousand guitar chords," he tells the house, "but most players use 187. You'd start else."

This is Joe Pass's year. Canny handling by Norman Granz — TV exposure, tours with Oscar, festivals, a von Schlieffen strategy of Pablo releases — have come together to spell Joe's name in bulbs. That's part of the story. The rest lies in Joe's musical mind and dexterous fingers. Along with Jimmy Raney, Jim Hall, Derek Bailey and Louis Stewart, Joe Pass is one of the best guitarists alive.

Jazz ain't known for overnight success, and Joe has paid heavy dues. His first album, "Sounds Of Synanon", indicates just how heavy . . .

"I was living in the cracks. To make a long short story out of it, I was hung up from the late '40s to 1960. I mean, I was really strung out — playing, but most of the time just running around. I wasted all those years, man, and I spent a long period incarcerated. I went into this self-help organisation in December, 1960, lived in it and gradually started becoming more independent. Shit — that's 17 years ago. Ever since then, I've changed my life patterns — take care of your business, raise a family, pay bills, become a citizen, 17 years with no shit involved."

He is candid about it, candid about everything, a nice guy who trusts in your goodwill. And the best way to play — no doomed teenie romance — is with all your senses.

We rapped about the West Coast movement and the old rubber sabre rattling between East and West. Crap, thought Joe. The real dividing line lay between studio musicians and public performers.

"I did that for six of eight years. Studio sessions and TV. I got enough to make a living, but it got to be a drag. I had to buy a 12-string, a classical guitar, a country guitar, a wah-wah and all that shit so I could be adaptable. The real studio musicians could play those instruments, banjo, mandolin, and they could sight read. Once you get into that circuit, it's good, but what happens is you lose interest in playing. You lose the desire, ambition, whatever it is — just do the gig and go home."

Joe stayed out and played. Tonight, a lot of the audience were kids, hanging on the old man's technique and scribbling on matchbook covers.

"They're getting a little bit hipper," said Joe. "They've been saturated with contemporary rock music — I mean, sometimes I wonder whatever happens to all those records that are made, man. They've heard enough of three chords. And it's a good thing for someone like George Benson to become a big pop star because he can play guitar, and even though he may be kept down to some formula because it works, he's still gonna be playing, you know. He's not gonna play Mickey Mouse music — it's not like The Who.

"It means that the mass audience like it and that puts all the players that can play in the same light."

"Have you ever played rock-'n'roll?" I asked.

"I fooled around with it. Nothing much. I played with a group one night for kicks. I tried wah-wah and fuzz tone. It was a lotta fun for one night, but I couldn't get into it. I got really exhausted, man. The energy is so heavy in those kinda groups, and a lot of it's without direction.

"I had a big amplifier, Fender guitar, and I was doing everything I could think of. It got boring — like, you bend a string, you might as well bend it right off the neck. What for? Now it's no longer even a guitar — is a sound coming out of the speaker. I even took the guitar and fed it back into the amplifier, used the feedback and played off that. That's insane. It's just an effect.

At that volume, you can't get your thought processes beyond simplification — it can't get beyond a basic 1 & 2. I haven't really analysed it, but . . ."

Joe isn't a bigot, just can't understand how anyone into guitar wouldn't want to know its beauties; rock's innovations like saying, Listen to this naked women — "Any two notes are complex, any two sounds, and I'm thinking about a whole series of notes. Man, you can't get into that. There's no room for it."

And the challenge for Joe?

"Sometimes it's like a fight between your mind and your hands. You can get it together for maybe two bars, then the other eight bars are like blah. But, see — if I keep doing it for another ten years, like, I'll have that shit down, man. I'll have to have it down. The more you keep doing it, it's gotta happen better."

A lot of musicians believe the audience can't tell the good from the bad. Joe doesn't go along with that. Intensely self-critical, he frets over his occasional inability to end a number.

"The minute you start thinking about what you're playing — like on that last tune — then all of sudden it's not working. You've got enough experience to get through, sure, but if you feel it's not good enough, that's important. If you're getting it down and you're happy, you're gonna project that. It's a kind of enlightened self-interest.

"People like to hear a player struggle, work. Most of those quotes in the last number were simply becuase I had to do something, you know. They came into my mind and I did them — see, when you're playing fast it's like This is NOW."

He was born in New Brunswick, raised in Pennsylvania, played his first gig at 13 or 14. His father made him practise because Joe is naturally lazy. Django Reinhardt was his first influence, "Honeysuckle Rose", "Lady Be Good", then he copped Bird and Diz and flipped. Be-bop. That was it!

"That just captured my all, my imagination, my desire. I wanted to do that."

The New Thing doesn't kill him, though he did plan to take a couple of Derek Bailey's albums back with him to study. Keith Jarrett he digs, and Gary Burton, finding the melodic and harmonic content identifiable. Back home, he likes to listen to Ravel, Bartok, Debussy, Stravinsky and classical guitar.

"I like to incorporate new things, but only if it feels natural. It's contrived if it's just like learning a bunch of licks and trying to find a place to put 'em. It's the other way round. I keep playing things and then they become a part of me musically. I consider myself more as a guitar player than a jazz player — I don't know what it is . . . I mean, it's not a matter of 'If It Ain't Got That Swing'. I'm from the generation where it has to have a feeling either harmonically or a tempo feeling to it.

"It's a problem sometimes when I have a choice of bass players. I can get one who can play some beautiful notes, really take you through some chord changes while you're playing, but his time isn't so good. Then there's the other cat who swing his ass off, I mean — he plays time cooked! — but he doesn't play beautiful notes.

"It's a toss up. I lean towards the harmonically inventive guy. Niels Hennin Orsted Pederson has both things. So have Sam Jones, Ron Carter, Ron Matthewson and Peter Ind."

The stocky, cigar-smoking virtuoso is a relaxing cat to hang out with. No temperament, a yan, a joke, a good-natured appreciation of Ronnie Scott's announcements: 'Thank you for Joe Pass. He doesn't say much, and what he does is largely rubbish.'

"At this particular time I like playing solo a lot because I find it challenging. It makes me work, and the one problem with me is I don't work, don't practise. I'm basically a lazy cat, like to eat and drink, read books, relax and goof, so this is a lot of work for me, mentally and physically. In a group you can coast a lot. Other cats play, you can feed off them."

The wordless empathy of musicians, the envy of writers, I gurgled.

"It depends on who you're playing with," said Joe pragmatically. "Like, I've played with some of the best cats, the best all-star cats — and it was a big drag. Everybody was doing their own thing."

And playing with Oscar? Joe had told *Jazz Journal* that speedy Oscar ought to play with his thumbs under the piano to understand the problems of a guitarist.

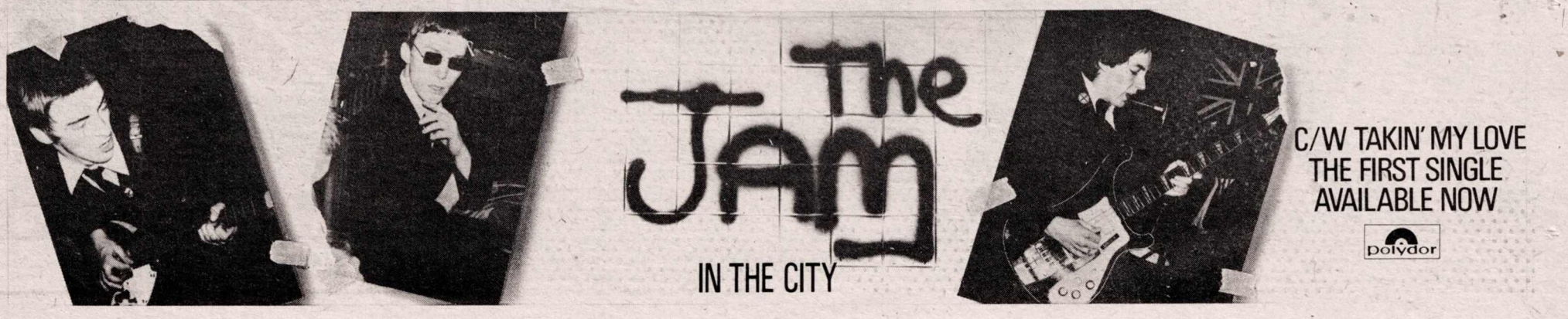
"It's fast. I depends — sometimes it's hard to keep up. A lot of things about playing depend on your frame of mind, how you feel in your emotional self. One night you can slide through everything, next time you can hardly play."

After seeing lesser talents — students of his — make it, Joe has finally made it himself, which, for him, means pulling an attentive audience for the stuff he wants to play.

"If you stay with what you're doing, keep doing it, something's gotta happen. If it's good and got some intrinsic merit, you'll be able to make a living."

Selected discography

Ella Fitzgerald/Joe Pass, "Take Love Easy" (Pablo 2310 702), "Ella & Pass Again" (Pablo 2310 772); Joe Pass, "Virtuoso" (Pablo 2310 708), "Virtuoso 2" (Pablo 2310 788); Joe Pass Trio, "Portraits Of Ellington" (Pablo 2310 716); Joe Pass, "At Montreux" (Pablo 2310 752); Milt Jackson, Joe Pass, Ray Brown, "The Big Three" (Pablo 2310 757); Oscar Peterson/Joe Pass "A Salle Pleyel", (Pablo 2657 015); "Porgy & Bess" (Pablo 2310 779).



THE SINGLE

STAR

HAR5124

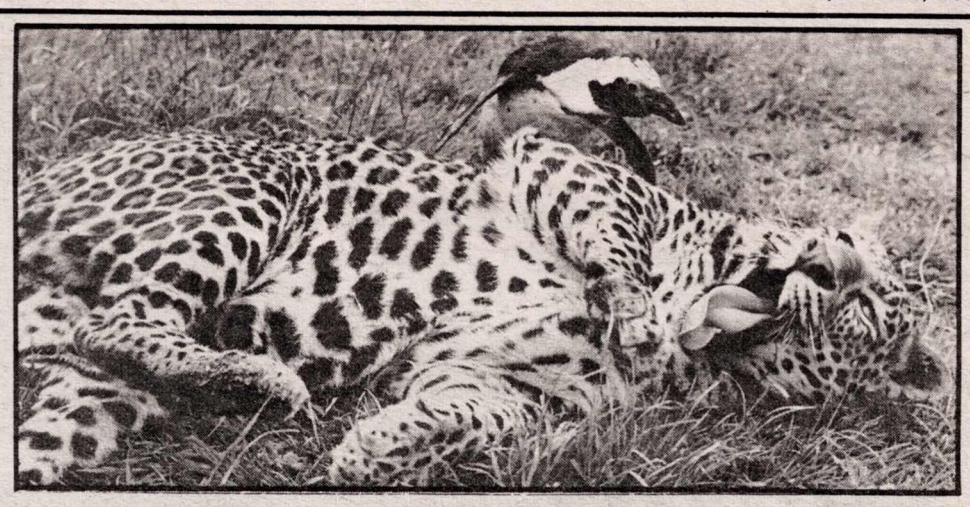
THE MAN

KEVIN AYERS

THE TOUR

Wed 27th April **LEICESTER** UNIVERSITY
Thur 28th April **GLASGOW** QUEEN MARGARET UNION
Fri 29th April **EDINBURGH** UNIVERSITY
Sat 30th April **STIRLING** UNIVERSITY
Sun 1st May **DUNDEE** UNIVERSITY
Wed 4th May **HULL** UNIVERSITY
Fri 6th May **BRISTOL** UNIVERSITY
Sat 7th May **MANCHESTER** UNIVERSITY
Sun 8th May **LEEDS** POLY
Tue 10th May **CARDIFF** TOP RANK
Wed 11th May **STOKE ON TRENT** KEELE UNIVERSITY
Fri 13th May **NORWICH** UNIVERSTIY OF EAST ANGLIA
Sun 15th May **LONDON** DRURY LANE THEATRE

HARVEST



Why A Penguin?

Why not? MONTY SMITH considers sundry recent elpees of diverse merit and origin

DON HARRISON BAND
Red Hot (Atlantic)

AS THE title track has it, *"Ready to go"* — straight to the cut-out bins. Absolutely commonplace rock'n'roll, with composer Don Harrison a banal, gruff, *"oh/awrite!"* vocalist.

The band (which includes Stu Cook and Doug Clifford from Creedence as the rhythm section) profess to "move'n-'groove" but they find it difficult to do a number in under four minutes. The effect is not so much dirty-ass as messy-botty. A Factory Production — Cosmo's, no doubt.

Mediocre-Meter: Diffidently pedestrian.

BELLAMY BROTHERS
Plain And Fancy (Warner Bros)

THERE'S NOTHING quite so irksomely catchy as their Doobie rip-off here. Chiming in at a paltry 35 minutes playing time, it's a bit of a swizz, too.

The Bellamy's may sound like a Seals And Croft with testicles, but it's still candyfloss-rock.

The one attempt at straight-ahead rock'n'roll ("Miss Misunderstood") isn't naughty or nice, and the trite, lovey-dovey lyricism rampant elsewhere (particularly on "If It's So Easy") is about as potent as Donovan's wishy-washy mysticism. A suitably safe emollient for old hippies.

Mediocre-Meter: Unobtrusively drab.

SAMMY HAGAR
Sammy Hagar (Capitol)

WHEN THE opening cut ("Red", in which Hagar's sidemen sound like a proficient Glitter Band) is followed by a ludicrously melodramatic rendition of "Catch The Wind", you realise this is going to be a weird hotchpotch.

Sure enough, Patti Smith's "Free Money" is later given the Hollywood Strings treatment. Scott Matthews is a good rock drummer but over-emphatic on the ballads, and Hagar sings in the same gravel-voiced monotone throughout.

The cover conception — everyone and everything in red — is cribbed from Antonioni's *Blow Up* and shot on the same South London location.

Mediocre-Meter: Colourlessly expendable.

NEKTAR
Recycled (Decca)

NO POSTCARDS, please; I realise the four Nektar-ines are British, but they were Hamburg-erised for so long that they've become inextricably linked with the stolid Kraut-rockers.

Their sluggish, synthesizer-based sound remains oppressively sullen through pretentiously-titled ditties like "Cybernetic Consumption" and "Automaton Horrorscope".

It's a depressingly nugatory, archetypical artefact from the mid-'70s, condescendingly offering obsessively synthesised anodynes for the more self-pitying inhabitants of this mortal coil.

If recycling is to treat so that further use is possible, this lot are milking a dead cow.

Mediocre-Meter: Miserably unimposing.

LAKE
Lake (CBS)

IT CERTAINLY makes a change to hear a German band producing lightweight, airey-fairey pop-rock, albeit remarkably eclectic.

On the only lengthy cut (10 minutes of "Between The Lines") Lake contrive to sound like a late-'60s San Francisco band, although the studied Germanic seriousness of "Jesus Came Down" grates a bit and there's something intrinsically daft about a Hamburg-based outfit dreaming of *"going to Mexico"* ("On The Run").

Producer / arranger / composer / mentor Detler Petersen concocts a pleasingly spacious sound and the two British lads (vocalist James Hopkins-Harrison and keyboard-player Geoffrey Peacey) are a definite plus factor.

Some of "Lake" is (almost) *sehr gut,* but as they themselves sing on "Sorry To Say": *"You're just not my style, but I'm sure you'll be fine for someone."* I'm sure they will.

Mediocre-Meter: Modestly competent.

ADRIAN WAGNER
Instincts (Charisma)

ALBUMS LIKE these force one to curse Robert Moog and his clever-dick invention.

A synthesiser piece dedicated to Nature seems to me wilfully paradoxical and although Wagner appears to have raided the BBC sound effects archive for babbling brooks, twittering birds and the like, his prosaic keyboard work remains obdurately urban, more redolent of road-works and traffic noises than pastoral bliss.

The one *song* ("Amazon") is dire, despite the presence of Mel Collins' saxes, and the single lively moment is Morris Pert's percussive solo on "Machu Picchu".

Side one foolishly begs the question "Where Are We Going?"; I'm off back to the Tannhauser Overture (yes, Adrian is indeed Richard's great, great grandson).

Mediocre-Meter: Ponderously insubstantial.

NUTZ
Hard Nutz (A&M)

THE ONLY hard nut I ever knew used to play for QPR and Millwall, and answered to the name of Tony Hazell.

Nutz do have a dedicated following (they consistently pack out the smaller venues and this is their third album), but I doubt whether any but the staunchest fans will fall about to this one.

It's not only average, it's *dated* average. Mike Devonport's compositions are solid enough, but Dave Lloyd's hard-edged vocals are undermined somewhat by the Queen-type harmonies from the other four geezers, and there's a bit of phasing here and there. You know the thing.

"Loser", "Wallbanger" and "Sick And Tired" sum up the resolutely heavy-handed approach and even their single, Dylan's "One More Cup Of Coffee", offers little relief from the overall lethargy.

Mediocre-Meter: Passably routine.

SHABBY TIGER
Shabby Tiger (RCA)

HENDERSON GIBSON is the sort of rough-diamond vocalist impersonated every night in pubs up and down the country, although there's something light and tasteless about the rest of this Midlands outfit.

Lyrically they're bogged-down in that elusive early-teen age group, their rhythm section could have been computer programmed, and on "Showdown" they come across like an Irish showband that's struggling to master the rudiments of reggae (complete with tra-la-la brass).

Mediocre-Meter: Inconsequentially dreary.

RORY GALLAGHER
Live (Polydor)

CULLED FROM "Irish Tour '74" and "Live In Europe" this is, for those inclined, a reminder of Rory's showy, bash-yer-bonce-against-the-wall school of guitar playing, captured in all its naked glory — or infamy, depending.

His voice is still reminiscent of the guy hollering for another Guinness from across the bar, but there's no doubting the crude power of his axe.

Ironic, then, that Blindboy Fuller's "Pistol Slapper Blues" is about the best cut — with Rory on acoustic.

Mediocre-Meter: Quaintly hackneyed.

DEEP PURPLE
Shades Of Deep Purple (Harvest)

MY BROTHER's still got his original Parlophone copy and still swears by it.

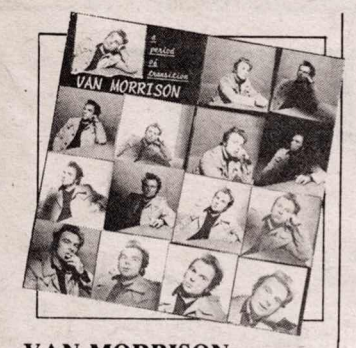
Certainly, listening to Purple's debut album after nine years gives cause for some affectionate memories: like throwing beer over one another and barmy wheelchair races during one of Purple's gigs at a college in north Kent in the days when "Mandrake Root" was their showstopper.

That's here, along with "Hush", "Help" and "Hey Joe". The predominant force is Jon Lord's gurgling organ work, still pyrotechnical but, together with Ritchie Blackmore's guitar, endearingly raw.

Maybe it was a pity they ever went to America. And just *where* did Rod Evans and Nic Simper (the original vocalist and bassist) disappear to?

Mediocre-Meter: Honorary exemption.

PLATTERS



VAN MORRISON
A Period Of Transition
(Warner Bros)

A MOST DISTRESSING set of circumstances is what we have here.

The first Van Morrison album since mid-autumn 1974, and a whole lot of heavy duty playing has delivered only one track out of seven which is real-deal joyful noise, while its six compatriots furnish only a slack, pale aural backdrop, signifying nothing beyond the thorough workmanlike performance they receive from the former maestro and his band.

As a Van Morrison album, "Period Of Transition" marks an uncomfortably real nadir of sorts, what with the domineering feel of the lion's share of its contents being devoid of anything truly passionate both melodically and lyrically.

The only attempt to overcome this grossest of deficiencies works by concentrating on hard-headed, bar-room midnight funk work-outs with Morrison very much the vocalist, the at-the-helm performer.

The main credits on the back-sleeve place special emphasis on denoting the "Nut and Skull Arrangements" to Morrison and his current partner-in-crime, Mac Rebennack (or "Dr John", as he's more popularly known).

Evidently, Morrison himself is well satisfied with the fruits of this partnership or else this album would never have seen the light of day. At least, this is what one presumes, particularly when scrutinising the singer/composer's activities over these last three years of vinyl inactivity.

"Veedon Fleece", the last legitimate predecessor to this latest work, was a strange, moody album with a concept of sorts largely inspired by (from all reports) Morrison's return to the Irish heritage which, after all, had inspired what was arguably his greatest recorded achievement, the "Astral Weeks" suite.

"Fleece" never rose to the heights of that latter epic work, and even had to bear its share of awkward moments wherein the singer's native intensity got stuck into some absurd patches of whimsied pretension (principally Morrison's baleful exhorting of William Blake and the Eternals like some hysterical punch-drunk Gothic vision of Zorro and his Caped-crusading minions in the otherwise not-unimpressive "You Don't Pull No Punches But You Don't Push The River"), but it still made a strong impression if only because Morrison was embracing new ideas and themes just when many of his contemporaries were snowed under in their old hand-me-down conceits.

And, most importantly, particularly in the light of the sour failings of "Period Of Transition", he was still very much the songwriter.

Though reviewed agreeably in this country by the critics, the album was greeted with several slighting critiques in the States, the dominant theme being that Morrison was running out of the old unrestrained hard-core passion that had always served as a centrepiece for his work, whether it be "Mystic Eyes", "T.B. Sheets", "Madame George" or "Caravan".

Whether these reviews had anything to do with Morrison's strange twists of resolve over the subsequent two and a half years is anyone's guess, but those months did witness a whole gamut of projects started, completed, then suddenly shelved for reasons only decipherable in the head of their instigator and creator.

First was an album's worth of new material recorded, apparently, somewhere in Europe with a small band including pianist Pete Wingfield. Morrison nixed the project even though Wingfield, for example, has openly expressed amazement at the incredibly high calibre of much of the music laid down.

Next up was a series of sessions that had Morrison working with The Crusaders — another album's worth of material again apparently forthcoming.

Again Morrison shelved the tapes and again one of the Crusaders stated in an interview that the music was the best he'd ever worked on (no mild recommendation when one considers the band's pedigree).

It was after this last star-crossed misadventure that Van Morrison started to get excited about returning back to the old white R&B fervour of club-land Britain. He jetted over specially to witness Dr Feelgood in L.A. and this one expedition may have iced it all for him, because the next announcement was that Morrison was up-rooting his organisation to head back to the Olde Country and dig into what may have been his comprehension of pub-rock — the Bees Make Honey/Brinsley Schwarz syndrome which unfortunately had already seen its best days.

His presence in England was noted at a variety of gigs — the Reading Festival, several Eric Clapton gigs (which he jammed on occasionally).

Morrison was obviously searching for a scene that no longer existed, and after mooted pairings with ex-Pretty Thing Phil May and with Bill Wyman (with whom he had apparently planned to do a skiffle album at one time) had come to nothing, he left quietly in disgust, with a new manager, arch-promoter Harvey Goldsmith, his only acquisition.

He returned to the States in the autumn of last year and thereafter somehow found himself drawn to the similarly restless likes of Mac Rebennack, hit off a strong connection, and, drawing other L.A.-based black heavies like Ollie Brown, Reggie McBride, Marlo Henderson and Jerry Jumenville, formed a sterling grit-edged soul big band to flesh out a whole stew of his songs in the studios.

Thus "A Period Of Transition". A weird title, obvious in one clear respect of course, but listening to the album, right now more than ever, one instinctively feels like renaming the effort "A Period In Limbo", because "Transition" signifies *change*, right, and the only change here is one clean away from the construction of strong tunes and restless pointed emotional outpourings.

Instead, one is presented with a succession of terse, usually quite unmelodic moody minor-chord funk motifs taken over by the excellent band who admirably under-pin Morrison's splendidly gnarled vocal performances. Lyrics are kept sparse and curtly to the point in the tradition of classic blues, titles like "You Gotta Make It Through The World" and "It Fills You Up" representing mostly the be-all and end-all of the lyrical contents.

This is all very well, I suppose, particularly as the band do sound impressively stocky and moody throughout, and Morrison himself has seldom been caught in better voice. In a way it can be seen as steering away from the florid poetry of parts of "Veedon Fleece" and the excessively laid-back portions of "Hardnose The Highway", right back to the gritty basics.

Only it doesn't quite work that way, at least not to these ears. I keep hoping for some transcendant KO punch to the song — the sort of sudden magic break that positively lit up most of the songs on the great "Moondance" — and it never happens. The songs stay fixed on their albeit gutsy wavelength, but that lack of a levitating, joyful moment ultimately makes that level quite mundane on repeated listenings.

Two out of the three songs reveal that shortcoming, while side two's slight diversity of style still ends up giving consistently short measure. The big band swing of "Joyous Sound" ends up sounding like a slightly chunkier remould of any given minor league Morrison rocker. "Flamingos Fly" is more forgettable, hepped-up Morrison, despite its promising title — agitated syncopation, a good bopping horn motif, a vocal chorus that *should* stick but doesn't because the thing's so slight.

"Heavy Connection" is easily the best track on this side — nothing startling — but with languid chord changes, lyrics which mix cliche with originality, and a chorus that sticks in the memory. It's no heavyweight Morrison work but it *suffices*.

Finally "A Cold Wind In August" — a ponderous blues — ends the album on a note of rather unconvincing desire. Again, passion is called for but the song itself isn't getting to grips with the feeling.

There is one heavyweight Van Morrison cut here. "The Eternal Kansas City" is the man in excelsis with everything ablaze. At first one is treated to a minute of ponderous choral work rather like the opening to the Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want" severed by a brief burst of be-bop jazz riffing before Morrison comes in and sets the piece in motion, drums pacing the song to a marching beat while a strong horn section scats in call and response. The lyrics use the old "Do you know the way to Kansas City" chestnut as a springboard for Morrison's own homage to the old jazz centre, openly eulogising the likes of Charlie Parker and Billie Holliday. In a word, it's simply gorgeous.

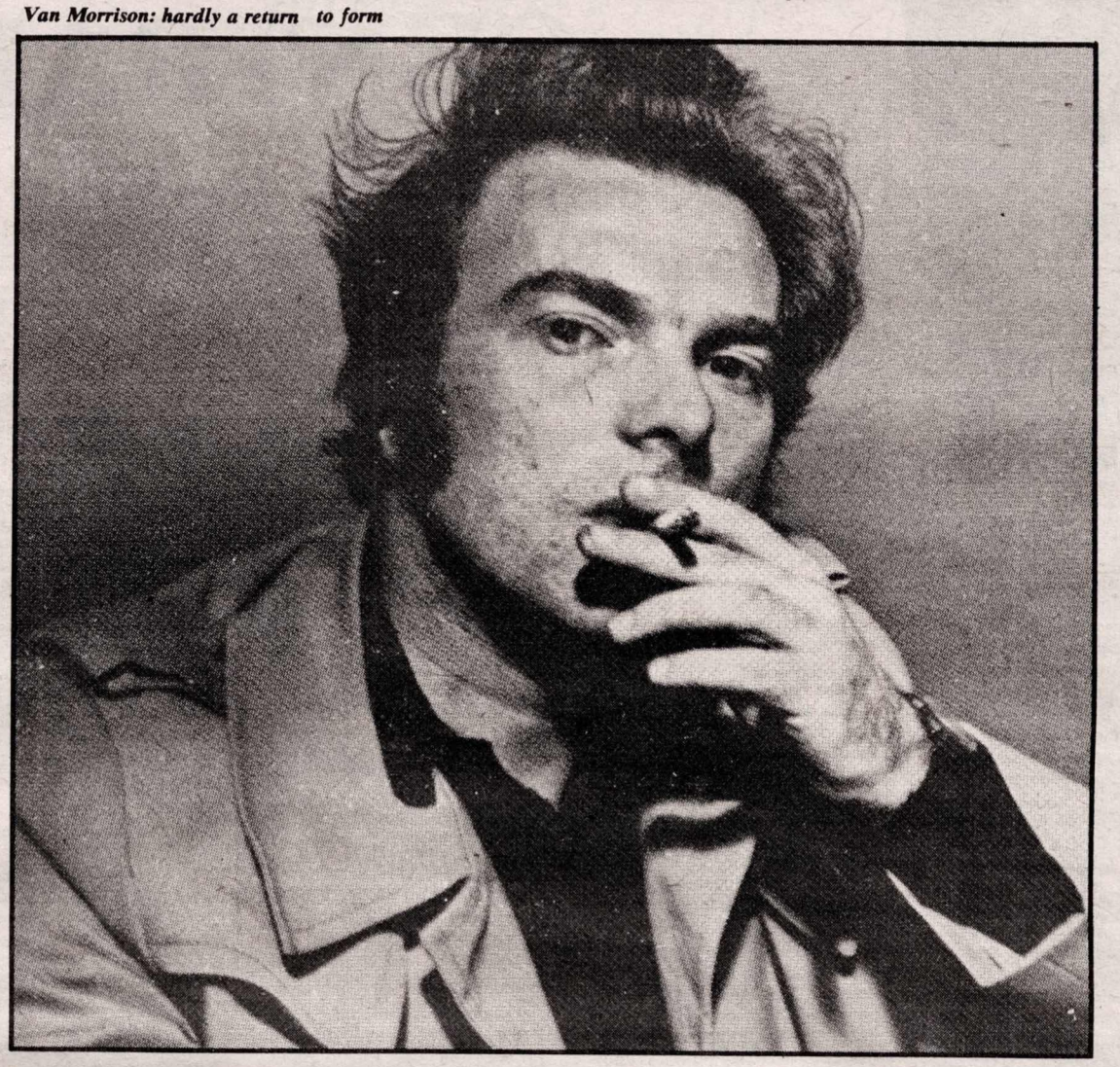
Van Morrison is a great, great figure in our music and his influence has never been felt more strongly than now with a whole new mess of youngbloods cutting their style on his old muscle.

In those three dormant years preceding this album's release, the likes of Graham Parker, Bruce Springsteen, Phil Lynott, Elvis Costello, Bob Seger and others have sprung into prominence, all bearing the mark of Morrison's influence. Indeed, it could be said that Morrison has instigated a whole new strain of rocker — the small, ungainly, feisty loser with passion is his patent first and foremost. One could only have hoped that "Transition" would have at least spotlighted the man's pre-eminence in this quarter, to have borne proof once and for all that this is where all the Heat Treatments have stolen their thunder.

Unfortunately, the album's failure in that area is one dilemma for which there are no answers. And the questions themselves look right now to be so uncomfortably close to the bone that I, for one, don't even want to ask them.

Nick Kent

Van Morrison: hardly a return to form



A PERIOD IN LIMBO?

JOHN GREAVES/ PETER BLEGVAD/ LISA HERMAN
Kew. Rhone. (Virgin)

WHEN I first heard that John Greaves and Peter Blegvad were to make an album with Mike Mantler and Carla Bley, I feared it might turn out to be a little more than a set of Henry Cow retreads.

However, not even familiarity with the complete Henry Cow/Slapp Happy output could prepare the listener for "Kew. Rhone."

It is completely, utterly unlike any other album you're likely to come across. Ever.

To begin with, the cover's not just the usual mildly decorative affair intended solely to catch your eye; neither is the lyric sheet the usual "I'm a poet" jack-off: lose them and you've not only lost your paddle, you've lost the creek as well.

Much of the album's uniqueness stems from Blegvad's lyrics, (more a series of word-games and puzzles than songs), which could be accused of descending into a cheap, meaningless surrealism, were it not for the immediate success of a few.

For these idiosyncratic lyrics, Greaves has worked out a staggering variety of intricate and unusual arrangements which bear only occasional resemblance to his past work with Henry Cow; in the main, they're more instantly memorable than most of that band's repertoire.

The album opens with a slight instrumental entree, "Good Evening", then it's straight into the main course with "Twenty-Two Proverbs", which, as the title suggests, is a collection of proverbs from various sources set to an arrangement of surprising regularity, featuring a frantic trumpet break from Mantler and some wrenching, rabid guitar from Blegvad, underpinned by quite exceptional drumming from former Cecil Taylor sideman Andrew Cyrille.

"Seven Scenes From The Painting 'Exhuming The First American Mastodon' by C. W. Peale" is a set of statements referring to the strange picture on the cover, of varying degrees of explicability. A slow, introspective, piano-based piece with a wistful, haunting melody and an air of cabaret sleaze on acid.

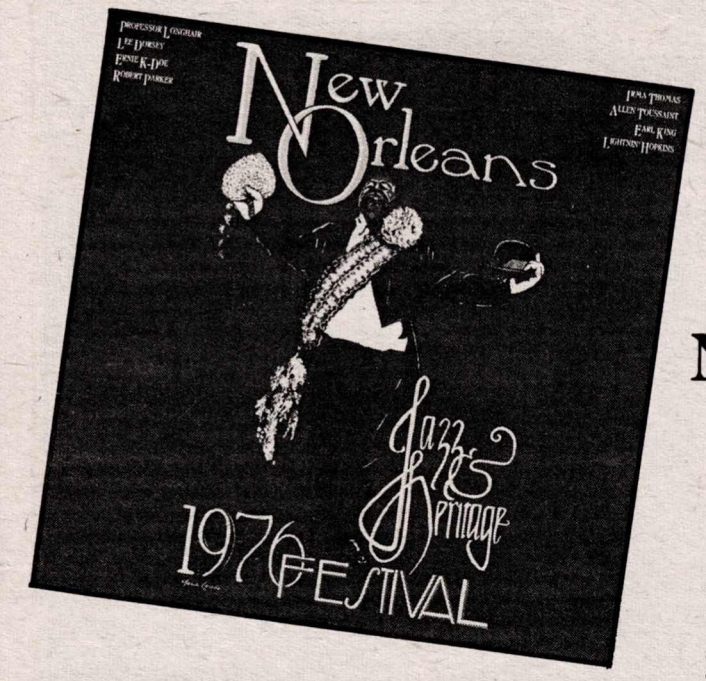
"Kew. Rhone." itself is a word-game in two parts, the first made up of partial anagrams of the title carefully arranged to make a readable whole, with a staccato musical texture comprising piano, organ and whistling — at least I *think* it's whistling.

The second part takes in a fuller arrangement behind vocal variations on the palindrome "Peel's foe, not a set animal, laminates a tone of sleep". Fun for art's sake, and probably the most successful piece on the album.

Lisa Herman's vocals throughout are fine (though maybe a little too pristine in places); indeed, all concerned with the project play with a taste and subtlety rarely heard these days.

Okay, so it mightn't be everybody's cup of meat, but if you've been feeling a little jaded of late, pass up that copy of "Animals" and pick this up instead. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Andy Gill



CRESCENT CITY CENTRAL

New Orleans R & B Revisited And Updated

ALLEN TOUSSAINT, LEE DORSEY, ERNIE K-DOE, ROBERT PARKER, IRMA THOMAS, EARL KING, LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS & PROFESSOR LONGHAIR
The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival 1976 (Island)

SINCE THE turn of the century, New Orleans has been an exotic melting pot for almost every form of ethnic American musical culture.

Unlike other similar localities, The Crescent City has a personalised pulse: a second-line syncopation which generates the atmosphere of the city like a complex life-support machine.

During the late '50s, New Orleans was to American roots rhythm and blues what Trenchtown has become to Third World black music. Due to the geographical location of New Orleans and Jamaica, the former has exerted a great influence on the latter, but then that's another story.

When restricting the subject matter to R&B, to list New Orleans' celebrated Sons and Daughters would read like a local telephone directory. This budget-priced double album (£3.99) recorded live for the most part during last year's Jazz & Heritage Festival, offers a revealing cross-reference to a number of artists who in the last 30 years have both pioneered and refurbished New Orleans' vast diverse musical heritage.

The programming of this compilation should perhaps have been reversed. To obtain a better insight, it's best to begin at the end with Professor Longhair and itinerant Texas troubadour Lightnin' Hopkins, then work your way through Earl King and Irma Thomas on side three.

On side two the mid-60s are represented by Robert Parker, Ernie K-Doe and Lee Dorsey.

Finally there's the whole of side one given over to the contemporary work of the city's current ambassador without portfolio, Allen Toussaint.

The most surprising aspect of the set is that the best performances are delivered by the oldest practitioners, namely Professor Longhair and Lightnin' Hopkins.

One of the tragedies of recent years is that since the legendary Professor Longhair was rescued from obscurity, his recording output has been criminally sparse.

Fast approaching his sixties, Longhair may well be in poor physical condition, but when he bellies up to the piano, he's instantly rejuvenated.

A two-fisted tornado, he puts men half his age to shame. This is the man who in the '40s defined New Orleans R&B piano playing and taught the likes of Fats Domino, James Booker, Mac Rebennack and Allen Toussaint every trick in the book.

Here the Professor re-runs two of his more famous compositions. "Tipitina" spotlights his ramshackled whorehouse pianistics and idiosyncratic, wailing, fractured vocals whilst his anthem "Mardi Gras In New Orleans" has him *whistling*.

With just bass and drums as support, Lightnin' Hopkins takes just three tracks — "Mojo Hand", "Baby Please Don't Go" and "All Night Long" — to illustrate all aspects of the blues.

With amplified slack-string guitar, this 65-year young veteran cuts the mustard in such expert fashion as to make his contribution a compulsory companion to Muddy Waters' current "Hard Again". Recommendations don't come much higher.

Guitarist Earl King made his reputation with Huey "Piano" Smith and though he's been a local celebrity for over 20 years, he's never enjoyed national popularity.

"Mama & Papa" and "Trick BAG" are typical of his predilection for songs about domestic problems and if you caught him on last week's episode of *All You Need Is Love*, then you'll probably want to shuffle down to Rock On and score some of his Ace label singles.

In Britain, Irma Thomas is best remembered for recording "Time Is On My Side", a song which the Rolling Stones covered with great success.

Backed by Tommy Ridgley's superb band, Ms. Thomas is a minor revelation. I didn't realise she could sing this good. "You Can Have My Husband But Please Don't Mess With My Man", "Cry On" and "Done My Part" speak well of her immediate future. With the right material, this full-throated soul stylist could attain the kind of success that has eluded her for so many years.

Of the next three artists, only Lee Dorsey handles himself with style and dignity. Whereas Robert Parker can only turn in a perfunctory re-run of "Barefootin'" and "Country Side Of Life" and Ernie K-Doe an embarrassing parody of "Mother-In-Law", Mr. Dorsey remains timeless.

With his familiar bone-dry vocal chords being exercised on "Workin' In The Coalmine" and "Holy Cow", 53-year old Lee Dorsey demonstrates that no one has ever improved on his relaxed ambience.

Only one carp, after hearing Dorsey's toaster-boaster rap with Southside Johnny on "How Come You Treat Me So Bad" I'd have welcomed some newer material. But if his presence can make a whole new generation start checking out his back-catalogue then I've no complaints.

It's obvious that this album is a showcase for Allen Toussaint who, backed by what I assume to be the augmented Meters, sings five of his "hits" is the kind of controlled manner one has come to expect from this prolific musician. "High Life", "Sweet Touch Of Love", "Play Something Sweet", "Shoorah, Shoorah" and "Freedom For The Stallion" are quite faultless in their presentation and a little of Toussaint goes a very long way.

I know that to many I'm preachin' to the converted but for those who have yet to enjoy The New Orleans Experience, this is where to start.

Roy Carr

Harvest Heritage
The Light Shines On with the Electric Light Orchestra on the Harvest Heritage album.
elo

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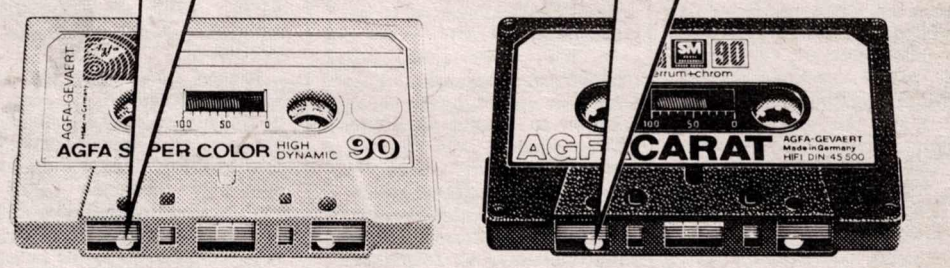


There's a lot to be said for Agfa
JOIN THE AGFA SOUND IMPROVEMENT MOVEMENT

MARY McGREGOR
Torn Between Two Lovers (Ariola)

MY TASTE IN WOMEN has always tended towards good honest trash. But if you get off on professional virgins, you'll just love Mary McGregor. For Mary, every time is the first time.

"This Girl (Has Turned Into A Woman)" has Mary dwelling on her dreary defloration with morbid relish, in a quite stomach-churning manner. The sanctimonious "Mamma" (which avid addicts of *Rich Man Poor Man Book Two* will recognise as the theme song of the stone-assed folk singer who the bad boy from a good family is hot for in a big way) has her piping: *"He makes me feel like a bed of hot coals/He hit me so hard he left me full of holes."*

Songs for swinging masochists, huh? A few men might be made happy by this record, since it contributes to the legend of women as the eternal victim, a cliche too uncomfortably close to the truth to be touted with such fervour in a public place.

There's grovelling and grovel. I mean, Laura Nyro subjugated herself on vinyl often enough, but she submitted with a certain dignity, fully aware of the consequences.

Mary McGregor allows herself to be seduced through a veil of rosy romanticism, trusting to the goodwill of her attacker. Grace Atkinson's declaration that "love is the victim's response to the rapist" has rarely been more appropriate.

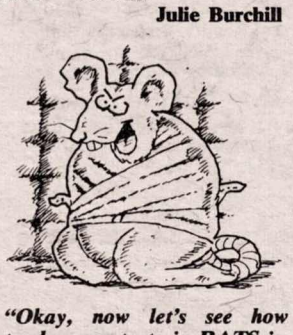
Variations on the theme abound. "I Just Want To Love You" finds Mary attempting to convince the object of her affections that he'll forget the girl he loves if he just hangs around with her long enough.

In "Take Your Loving" she's telling her boy he'll only break her heart if he stays (though judging from the stance assumed elsewhere, one gathers that this is just what she's angling for). "Torn Between Two Lovers" is a hit here and in America, proving that people is dumb no matter on what side of the Atlantic they're parked.

Every song is a pale, pretty, pastel reproduction, custom-made for girls who hang Laura Ashley posters on their walls. The slight, fragile melodies and sensitive guitars are in no way to blame for the horrific banality of this album.

Full credit for *that* goes to Miss McGregor herself, the numerous nasty songwriters, and the minds of the morons who will no doubt lap up this album by the crateful. File under "Yeuchh!"

Julie Burchill

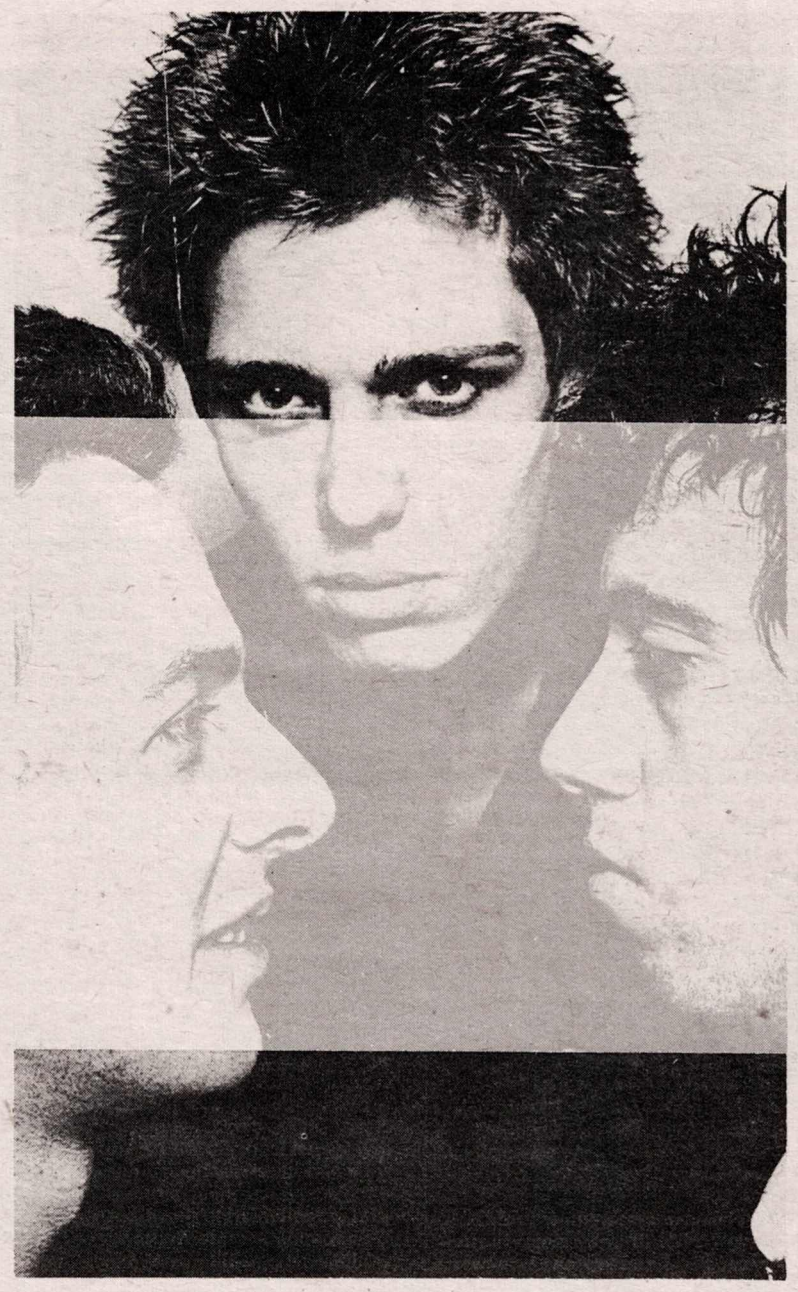


"Okay, now let's see how trashy your taste in RATS is, baby! Let's you and me get subjugated . . ."

CLASH OFFER -FREE E.P.

A RYVITA OF YER OWN, MATE! Nah, look here. Nah, seriously. Me and yer dad is sick of you kids wiv yer ping-pong and yer sponsored walks — can't yer find somefink worfwhile to do wiv yer holdiays? When we was kids it wouldn't have taken us three weeks, yeah, THREE WEEKS, to take up an offer like this here from those nice ladies and gents at *NME*. Just you get down to that record shop this minute and pocket a copy of The Clash Album, an' IF you're lucky you'll find you've got one of them there red stickers wot they've stuck on the inner sleeve of the first 10,000 sold and then all yer 'as to do is write yer name and address (yer see, I know you can write when it suits yer) on that picture over there, nah, on the light bit yer twit, and send it off with the sticker to The Clash Offer, Campsbourne Rd, London N8 7PT. They don't even want any money with it, and then you're larfin. Cos they'll send yer a Genuine Collector's Item, it says here, namely a 14-minute EP with two new Clash songs, "Listen" and the UTTERLY INCREDIBLE it says here "Capital Radio" PLUS an earful of Tony "Do I Get Royalties For This, Nick?" Parsons inerviewing the band on Clash Philosophy 1977, it says here. An' if that don't get you through yer O-levels, nuffin will. Say thank-you to the gentleman.

This offer self-destructs at the end of April.



SCORPIONS ON TOUR

April 22 Electric Circus Manchester
23 Wakefield Tech. Coll.
24 Wigan Casino
25 Cat's Whiskers Burnley
26 Barbarella's B/ham.
27 Sound Circus London
29 Rock Garden Middlesbro
30 Bolton Coll. of Tech.

May 1 Sheffield Top Rank
2 Outlook Doncaster
3 Brighton Top Rank

Great new album 'Virgin Killer' from RCA.
PPL 14225

Ultravox' John Foxx: they're selling postcards of the hanging.

ULTRAHYPE!

(It's a chill wind that blows success)

ULTRAVOX
Ultravox! (Island)

ULTRAVOX ARE a hype, right? I keep hearing it, and anyway they reek of it. Just look at their contrived, intense-eyed, PVC punk image, and the amount of push that Island are giving them. H-Y-P-E.

Yet this album has had less advertising than the latest from, say, Status Quo, Supercharge or The Clash. And if you want contrived visuals — well, there's a lot of bands getting Saviour Of The Universe media treatment (Jones, Strummer & Simenon this month) and who trade just as heavily as Ultravox on capturing the identikit Face Of '77 look.

Sure, I know, their music's great — sorry, their attitude — all this Sound Of The Westway and razor edge power chords lark. This *may* be so, but The Clash and The Pistols undoubtedly spend inordinate lengths of time in front of the mirror, and are just as deadly serious about how they look as this bunch of goons. Luckily for them, they carry it off a little more convincingly than Ultravox.

Where the hype label really catches Ultravox is in the fact that their first known gig came *after* the Island signing: a band out of nowhere playing support to The Hot Rods in their brand new clothes, with a brand new expensively packaged album. An arrogant "hello, love me" entrance with no live gig goodwill to act as a safety net.

In a way such a debut is requisite to the genre — for Ultravox fall into the old intellectual sardonic glam rock category, updated to take in such magic ingredients as Boredom ("Satday Night In The City Of The Dead"), Alienation ("I Want To Be A Machine"), The Street ("Wide Boys") and New Wave ("Life At Rainbow's End (For All The Tax Exiles On Main Street)").

Their true heritage numbers Bowie, Steve Harley, Ian Hunter, "Sheer Heart Attack" Queen, Jobriath, and above all Roxy Music. Having lost Bryan's Boys to Polydor, for Island to immediately come out with a commodity this similar to Roxy's debut marketing gambit — dress sense, album packaging, previous history (lack of), line-up, vocal sound (on the single at least), even internal relationships (John Foxx being songwriter boss of this band) is almost beyond the bounds of credibility (in both senses of the word).

But if they're good, who cares? Don't be fooled by the opener, "Satday Night In The City Of The Dead", which sounds like Them — furious R&B intro'd by wailing harp — with high rise, dole queue cliches which don't grate overmuch because of the cut-up fever of Foxx' delivery, and a gawky robotic backbeat.

The R&B/punk connotations are misleading; for a start there's really only one other fast number. Energy and anger have little to do with the romantically bored pose Ultravox strike.

Foxx puts on his Bryan Ferry voice for "Life At Rainbow's End", as Brian Eno gets his clanky production into stride — rhythm section mixed high and thuddy, a very non-guitar hero sound for Stevie Shears, who's always plinking towards the periphery with attractive grey tones and true minimalist economy, and a wide range of colourless sounds from keyboards/violin player Billy Currie.

Shears and Currie, and even Foxx, are sublimated to the mood at all times — and the underlying mood of the record is the coldness of "I Want To Be A Machine".

But it's not the coldness of a David Bowie, whose "Low" posture sends a chill up the susceptible spine because finally the calculating poser seems to be posing as something as cold-blooded as himself.

Ultravox are just playing games — though Foxx' imagery is so cliched (as titles like "The Wild, The Beautiful And The Damned" bear witness) that it's possible to believe he's actually kidding *himself* too.

But at least he's acting diffident, which is far more bearable than some of the self-deceptive, self-righteous, empty vessel ranting and droning that's going down these days.

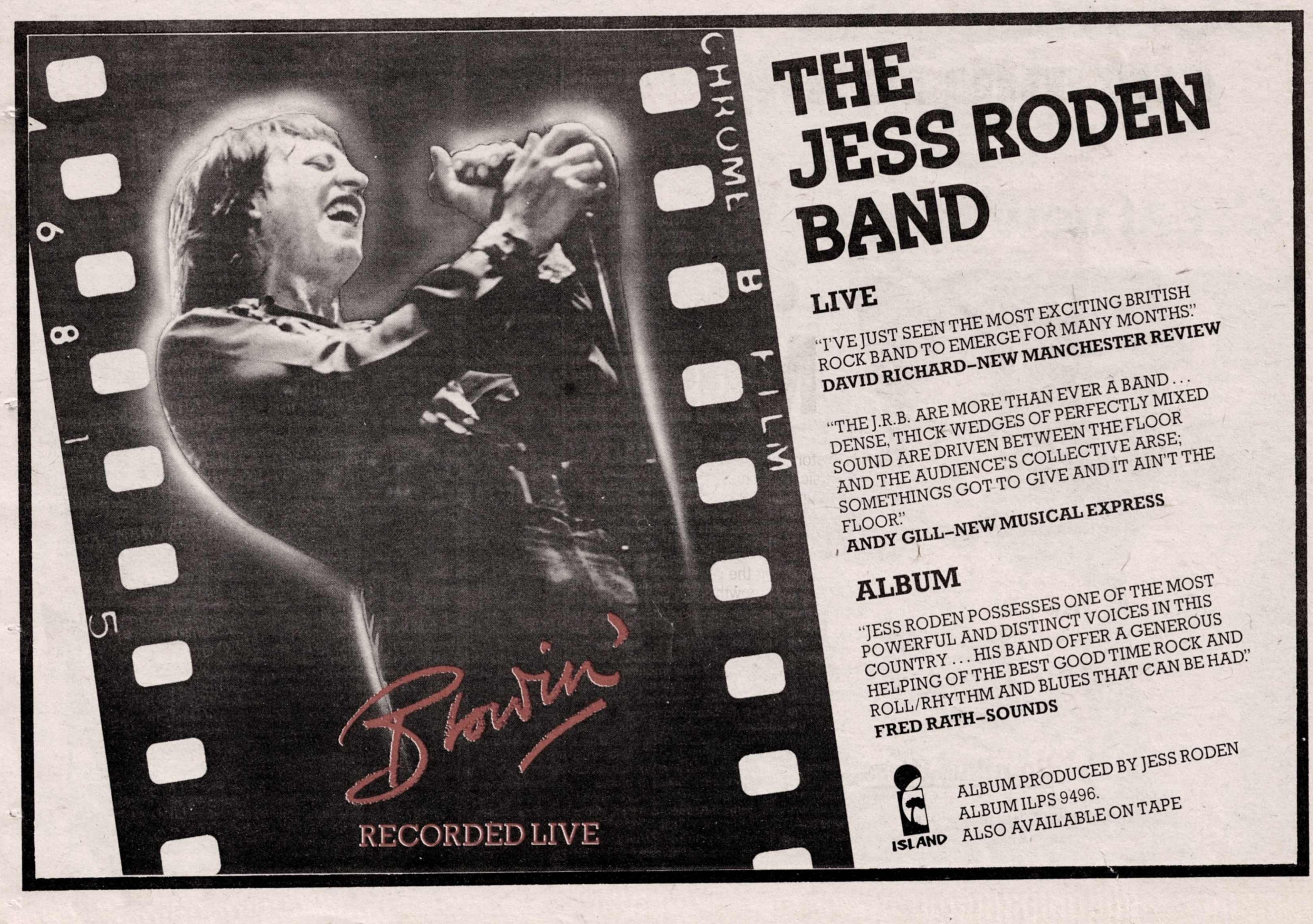
He writes a good tune, mind. Every song is memorable, and only "Lonely Hunter" is boring — and that's saved by the intricate yet simple machinery riffs.

They really do carry off the machine sound well. The only objectionable instrumental foible is Shears' penchant for flattening notes.

Oddity of the album is "My Sex", a studiedly cold and beautiful track (incredibly pretentious on first hearing), playing on dehumanisation again.

I don't believe Ultravox, and I don't like them — but I like their album.

Phil McNeill



THE JESS RODEN BAND

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DAVID RICHARD–NEW MANCHESTER REVIEW

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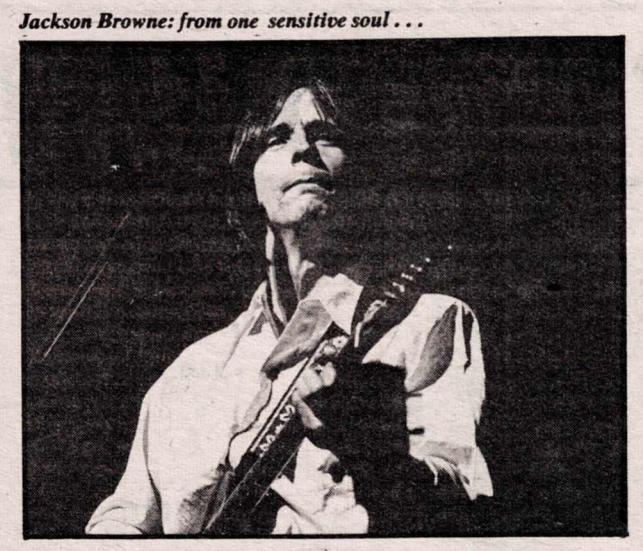
Jackson Browne: from one sensitive soul . . .



IMPORTS

EVER SINCE I was a kid, I've been turned on by upper-class black gospel music.

It took a long time to convince me that any soul vocal group had the edge on The Five Blind Boys (was there ever a lead singer like the Boys' late Archie Brownlee?) while Rosetta Tharpe and Marie Knight's "Up Above My Head" and the Rev. R. A. Daniels' powerhouse "She's The Lily Of The Valley" (the latter actually released here on a Capitol single!) were turned prematurely grey by frequent bashings on my Dansette.

Which explains why I've spent the past week tuning into "The Dixie Hummingbirds — Live" (Peacock). **The Hummingbirds** are possibly *the* male gospel group, a fact recognised by Paul Simon when he signed them up for "Rhymin' Simon", the ploy paying off when a hit single "Love Me Like A Rock" resulted.

They've been in existence for about 38 years and their lead singer Ira Tucker helped train Bobby Bland. I could provide a score or more equally impressive facts, but they all add up to the same thing — that the Birds have been, and still are, an important part of black music history.

"Live" contains much of their most requested material — such as "Who Are We?", a semi-countrified musical view of the group's life on the road, and "Let's All Go Out To The Programmes", on which the Birds provide impressions of their closest rivals (The Blind Boys, The Mighty Clouds Of Joy, etc.) — and therefore would appear to be a nigh indispensable acquisition for anyone whose interest in the roots of soul lays deeper than mere disco dreckery.

Now that the Passport deal with Phonogram has expired, importers will probably make hay with the likes of "Pazzband", the label's latest release. **Pazzband** are a four-piece from Oak Park, Illinois and their Randy Brecker, Larry Fast, Clarence Clemons (of the E Street Band) bedecked album has been clocking up hefty sales throughout the Mid-West and the East Coast.

Glad tidings for multi-speaker freaks with the news that WEA have imported 20 Elektra / Asylum CD-4 items for sale at £3.99 here. All taken from best-selling back-catalogue, the titles include **Carly Simon's** "Hotcakes", "Playing Possum", "No Secrets", "Carly Simon" and "Best Of . . ."; **Joni Mitchell's** "Hissing Of Summer Lawns", "Court And Spark"; **Jackson Browne's** "Late For The Sky"; **Eagles'** "One Of These Nights" and "On The Border"; **SHF Band's** "Souther - Hillman - Furey Band" and "Trouble In Paradise"; **Bread's** "Best Of . . ." and "Baby I'm A Want You"; and **Judy Collins'** "Colours Of The Day" and "Judith".

The **Mark and Clark Band,** who have an album around titled "Double Take" (Columbia), lack nothing in the way of novelty appeal. Mark and Clark Seymour are identical twins who have elected to rock from the stools of twin grand pianos. As they write a fair line in commercial songs and provide harmony vocals in a manner not far removed from Edison Lighthouse, I can imagine them achieving chart placings in the not too distant future — especially if the right TV gigs come their way.

But that double-helping of Liberace (Rockwitz and Landrover?), stuffed between layers of John Tropea, Elliott Randall and Hugh McCracken guitar-work, just sends me into instant squirmishes. Yukkk!

To get the taste out of my mouth I'll move on to list some of the week's new arrivals, a tally that includes **Bobbye Hall's** "Body Language For Lovers" (20th Century); **Ray Price's** "Ray Price and The Cherokee Cowboys — Reunited" (ABC); **Cleveland Eaton's** "Instant Hip" (Ovation); **Walter Jackson's** "I Want To Come Back As A Song" (UA); **Larry Coryell's** "Fairyland" now reissued on Zodiac; **Eddie Floyd's** T.K. produced "Experience" (Malaco); the **Faragher Brothers'** Hall and Oates-like "Family Ties" (ABC); "Sun Power" (Capitol) by **Sun,** an 11-piece in Brass Construction mode; **Jim Chesnut's** "Let Me Love You Now" (Hickory) debut album by a singer-songwriter who's been around Nashville for a fair while now; and "Giesing Woman" from **Eric Gale,** a Columbie release that has all the hallmarks of a CTI item, with Grover Washington, Patti Austin and Bob James aiding and abetting. I feel better already.

It seems that just about everyone wants to employ Emmylou Harris on harmonies these days. Latest is **Gary Stewart,** who slots her in alongside Rodney Crowell on "Rachel", a Crowell-penned track from Stewart's new album "Your Place Or Mine" (RCA).

I've never been over-enamoured with Stewart's somewhat anguished vocal style — and anyone with *that* much uncontrollable vibrato makes me distinctly unhappy.

Nevertheless, "Your Place" is a palatable affair containing a selection of bar-room ballads and redneck rockers, penned by the likes of Crowell, Guy Clark and Willie Nelson, while the tag-along pickers include Jerry Shook, Chip Young, Harold Bradley, Weldon Myrick, Pete Drake, Pete Carr, Mac Gayden, Reggie Young, Leo LeBlanc, Bobby Thompson and Josh Graves.

"Visit the Country Hall Of Fame" advises the inner sleeve. No need really, most of its future members can be heard within the grooves of "Your Place".

Roll over Hank and Jimmie, we've got some live 'uns movin' in! This time it's **Ann Sexton** who's playing the part of the sweet ever-lovin' in place of Millie Jackson. Ann Sexton? Yeah, she's a new name to me too and I guess from the title of her album "The Beginning" (Sound Stage) that she's pretty unfamiliar to most who haven't got a season ticket for the Harlem Apollo.

Nevertheless, the lady is checkworthy and though she's working in a world where there's a surfeit of unrewarded

Joni Mitchell: . . . to another — in Quad

talent — I mean, just when did Lorraine Ellison, Laura Lee, Ann Peebles etc. last really hit the pay-dirt chartwise? — she's a soulful body who's got all she needs in terms of ability.

Now all that's required is a little luck and promotion.

Latest "Live In Japan" (Trio) job to head this way is by **Otis Rush,** recorded back in July '75. Bluesmasters even more knowledgeable than Muddy Shaar Murray have hinted that it's the most potent Rush item to appear for some time. And while I'm on the subject of Otis, it's worth noting that his "Right Time, Wrong Place" elpee is at last available, on Bullfrog.

A Nick Gravenites-produced affair, it was recorded for Capitol in February 1971 as part of a blues-bash that the label was indulging in at the time. However, as nobody got particularly excited about the sales accrued by the Fred McDowell and Guitar Junior releases, Rush's contribution to the cause got shelved — until now.

In 1971 a guy named **Ron Weiser** opened up a home studio in L.A. and began putting out singles by '50s rockers. Then **Ray Campi,** a legendary rock figure who'd opted out to become a school-teacher, came in bringing with him a number of tapes recorded in 1956-57, which Weiser eventually released on album.

Since that time, 10 albums and 42 singles / EPs have emanated from Weiser and now, for the first time, a deal has been set up that'll make his label, known as Rollin' Rock, readily available in Britain — Rollin' Rock imports only previously being carried by just one or two specialist shops.

Four albums are currently available — all by '50s rockers but cut in the '70s — these being Ray Campi's "It Ain't Me! It's The Eager Beaver Boy"; **Mac Curtis'** "Good Rockin' Tomorrow"; a various artists' compilation titled "Rollin' The Rock — Vol. 1"; and **Jackie Cochran's** "Rockability Legend".

Many of the large chains will now be carrying these imports but should any reader experience difficulty in obtaining them in his area then there's always a mail-order service which operates from Rollin' Rock U.K., 35 Pen-y-bryn Way, Newport, Salop.

The cost of the discs is four quid a throw but if you're ordering by mail order add 25p to cover postage and packing on up to four albums.

Fred Dellar

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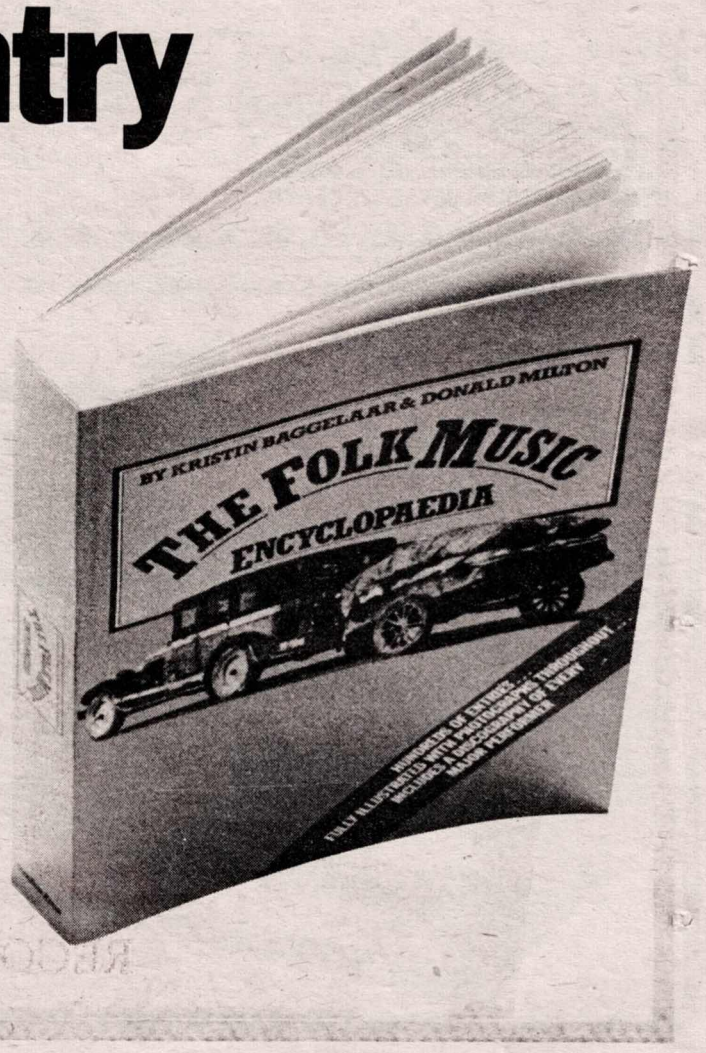

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DON'T TOUCH

TAPES: ROY CARR

(With thanks for expert assistance to Bernard Futter.)

TAKE ONE and cue cassette decks!

Over the last five years the demand for reel-to-reel tape recorders has dramatically declined and there's a stampede in the sale of domestic stereo cassette decks.

Aside from the obvious economical advantages they have to offer, it has been the introduction of the Dolby System and the general sophistication of the basic hardware that has been directly responsible for the wide acceptance of tape as either a supplement to any good hi-fi system or in preference to vinyl.

Cassettes can now be termed legitimate hi-fi, whereas a few years ago they were still a low-fi novelty.

Though cassettes didn't really come into their own until the beginning of the 70s, the story begins around 1963 — when Philips standardised the domestic cassette recorder.

Technology on the subject was still in its infancy at the time, and nobody really expected this innovation to develop as legitimate hi-fi. That was still the domain of both the record and the reel-to-reel tape.

But adaptation of the Dolby System from the recording studio and the subsequent stabilisation of tape speed quickly enabled cassettes to realise their market potential.

Without getting too tecnical, the Dolby System eliminates tape-hiss and thus clarifies the high frequencies, and that's all you really need to know.

So let's get down to the basics. Almost all hi-fi manufacturers have developed their own ranges of cassette decks. Some are excellent, while others aren't worth giving house space.

So I'm going to recommend some cassette decks which are a very good basis from which to make your final selection. As usual when pricing specific items, I will refrain from stating the recommended retail price, but quote an average discount figure.

Fundamentally all the machines have the same basic functions and facilities, for unlike tuner/amps, when you purchase a cassette deck you don't get increased facilities (whether you need them or not) the more money you pay.

Though it's possible to pick up machines for less, except for the front-loading **Audiotronic ACD 880D (£89.95)** I wouldn't recommend any deck under £100.

If money is no option, you can fork out £927 for the truly remarkable **Makamichi Tri-Tracer 1000** which, like reel-to-reel machines, incorporates three tape heads. But it's possible to attain excellent results for far less.

Two relatively inexpensive machines are, the **Technic RS263US (£99.95)** and the **Audiotronic ACD990D (£99.95).** A special feature of the ACD990D is that, unlike other decks, it incorporates an optimum bias setting plus a comprehensive chart which denotes the pre-set on no less than 40 top cassette tapes (but more about bias a little later on).

For a few greenbacks more, there's the **Pioneer CTF2121A (£139.95).**

As with all Pioneer equipment, this front-loading cassette deck is value for money. I'm not going over the top when I state that, in this price range, the CTF2121A is an odds-on favourite, offering a performance comparable to other decks selling at around £200. Check this one out without delay!

And while you're at it, two other items well worth your attention are the **Trio KX260 (£155)** and the **Teac A170 (£160).**

Much further up the scale **Nakamichi** offer their **550** at £338 and the **600** at £349. If you've got that kind of money, Makamichi must be considered.

However, as with all hi-fi systems, in terms of all-round improvements the law of diminishing returns applies the more you spend.

So I've stacked up some quality hardware. Big deal! But what's the best method of auditioning this little lot!

Well, when you're buying hi-fi, you can take along your favourite album and check out the reproduction and the nuances. But with cassette decks, while it's fine to take along a Zeppelin tape if that's your penchant, a tape of slow piano music is the ultimate test.

Allow me to explain. With slow piano music any technical defects in tape speed stability will be instantly detected via 'Wow' and 'Flutter'. The former relating to low frequency, the latter relating to high frequency deviations of sound quality.

Apart from that, a large percentage of pre-recorded rock tapes are compressed because the original frequency response is so great that an ⅛-inch cassette tape can't accommodate as much as either a ¼-inch reel-to-reel tape or a disc. The difference isn't audible to most ears — but watch out for low-flying sheep dogs!

Let's move on.

Only a schmuck would play a chewed-up disc on a sophisticated hi-fi system and claim he'd attained Nirvana, so don't expect the ultimate in listening pleasure by using cheap blank cassette tapes. False economy is alien to the world of hi-fi so don't expect anything more than the pits from a 90-minute tape you've just bought for 55p!

The stores are crammed with reputable name brands and just as many with dubious origins and pedigrees. Accordingly the prices for such tapes fluctuate alarmingly.

The Trio KX620 Stereo Cassette.

TOP TEN SUPER HI-FI BUYS FROM CAVENDISH!

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NME reviewers listen to a cassette.

However, if you bulk-buy it's possible to obtain a healthy discount on blank cassettes. Shop around, but just remember a job-lot of cheapo-cheapo tapes often prove to be nothing more than magnetic bog-rolls.

When purchasing a cassette deck you will find — in amongst the instructions — that the manufacturer recommends that a specific tape(s) be used with his machine. This isn't just a commercial tie-up. This is where "bias" comes into the plot.

Every machine has a different bias level — a charge that activates the magnetic particles on a tape. This ain't *Tomorrow's World* so there's no need to delve deeper. But to obtain maximum efficiency and best sound reproduction it's best to use the tape the manufacturer recommends.

As I mentioned earlier, the Audiotronic ACD990D (£99.95) is the only machine that I know of that incorporates an optimum bias setting which enables one to use any tape. All you have to do is consult the chart they provide.

If you twist my arm I'll recommend some tapes: **Sony, Maxell** and **Ferrichrome** are acknowledged to be of the highest quality. But if your machine doesn't recommend them then do as it tells you.

Without doing individual extensive test-drives, I'll say the cassettes decks I've brought to your attention are all extremely good if you wish to make your own domestic recordings. Indeed, if you're an aspiring singer/songwriter or run a group, they're a short-cut to cranking out some home-made demos.

The results can be better than you'd imagine. Sure, £300 worth of domestic hardware can't hope to compete with a 16-track studio boasting £100,000 of sophisticated technology, but nevertheless trial and error can result in a reasonable performance that won't prove offensive to music publishers, record companies or agents.

If you're a working band with a good sound mixer then you can plug your cassette deck directly into the board and you've (almost) got it made. But if you haven't gotten out of the garage don't dismay. For something like £30 you can pick up an **Allen & Heath** mixer, then it's up to you to budget the cost of the microphones.

Akai and Eagle do a range of microphones that start around £10 apiece, but the more money you invest in microphones the better the finished results. So if you can scrape together some extra cash take a good look at what **Shure** and **AKG** have to offer.

It must be said, however, that there are limitations to what you can achieve with a domestic cassette deck. Unlike reel-to-reel (a subject I will deal with in the future), cassettes don't give you flexibility to edit and overdub that you get with a **Teac 3340** reel-to-reeler — a four-channel simulsync stereo tape deck that enables you to plug four microphones directly into the machine, mix, and achieve a truly splendid end product. But then, that little toy would set you back something like £780.

Though I don't wish to go into this machine in great detail, **Sony, Technic** and **Teac** have recently combined their technical resources to develop a machine which, given time, could eventually revolutionise the cassette industry.

Together these three have pioneered **Elcaset** — a cassette deck which utilises a ¼-inch cassette tape playing at 3¾ ips as opposed to the standard cassette speed of 1⅞ ips.

Sony have been the first to put a machine on the market, retailing at something like £350. John Entwistle recently demonstrated one of these when I visited his home studio and I was, to say the least, impressed.

With Christmas only eight months away, be extra nice to someone who loves you!

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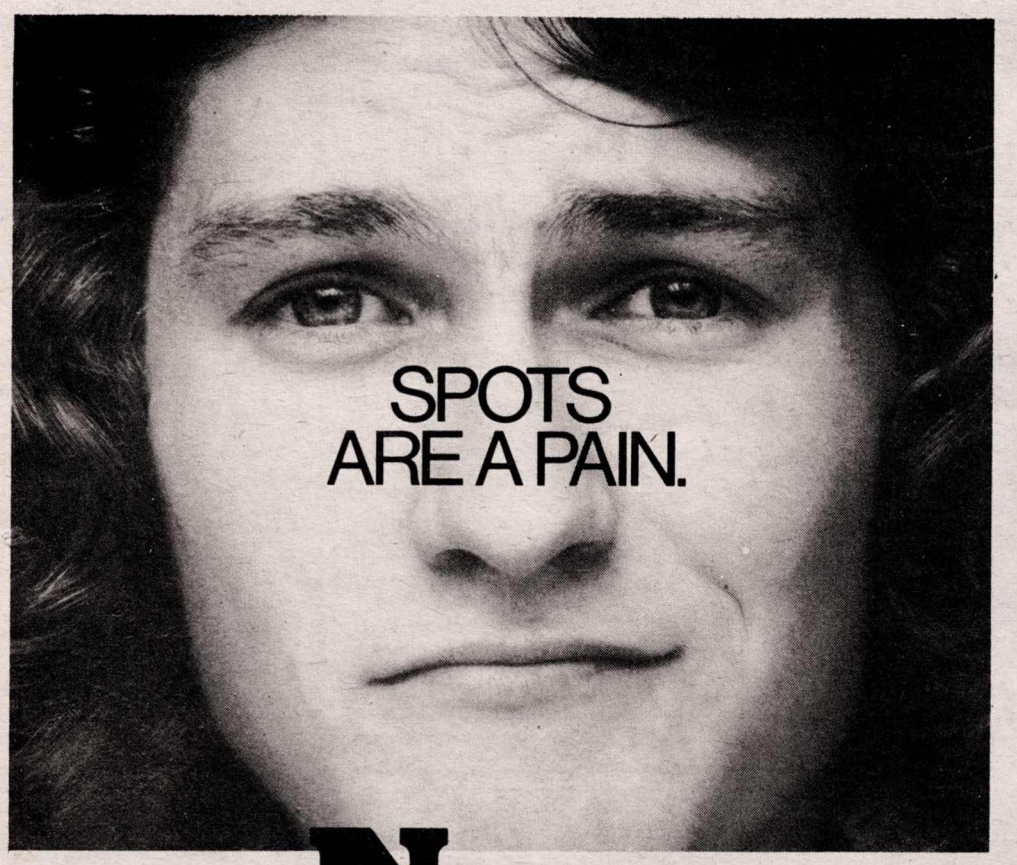

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New FEELGOOD gets into that macho pose

Pre-punk pinheads' patriotic victory

Great Easter Rock'n'Blues Express

MUNICH

THE OLYMPIA HALL in Munich is an enormous, strangely structured circular auditorium not far from the athletes' staying quarters where the shooting tragedy of the 1972 Olympics happened. It's got a ceiling like a lumpy mattress, a hard middle-floor where the majority of the kids huddle, and high rows of seats where patches of morose looking heads poke out. Right around the widely corridored perimeter there's a multitude of stalls: eats, drinks, posters, T-shirts, head gear . . . It's a fab place, the Olympia.

The German kids are uncomplaining, smiling — and they like their rock 'n'roll. Which is maybe why the promoters gave them this treat billing, rather unimaginatively labelled the Great Easter Rock 'n'Blues Express: some of the best traditional British rock music; kind of made me feel patriotic for a moment or two . . .

Like when **Status Quo** drove to the end of their gale-force set, the kids flailing epileptically, with the odd tentative pogo-version, smiling and sweating, shouting and waving, who could deny that Quo are one of the Greats? And British.

OK, so they tend to go on a little bit, but in performance it all depends on your personal point of view and whether you want to dance or denounce. Their records are an unfortunately necessary side-effect.

Live, the great thing about them is that it's ultimate musical excess, with the emphasis on excess. Who ever wanted music? Quo really don't need to be accepted on any basis but fan-worship, and they have a heck of a lot of that. They are merely derived from Canned Heat and The MC5, instead of The Stooges and The MC5. And that's unique.

Apart from the intoxicating atonal effects there's some mean visuals too. A blue (denim?) curtain is draped three ways around the stage, a wind machine occasionally catches the lads' locks, and there are sharply defined lights flooding the stage so that the band can actually be seen as they march stridently around and fall in for the legendary Quo antics.

Highlight of their set for me was Rossi's voice, which isn't so much non-musical as non-existent (but right because of it), and his pure holdout guitar solos that place him at least above Ted Nugent. Every time they played one of their hits I couldn't help but laugh at the audacity of actually being able to get Top Thirty placings from them.

I got to the hall just in time to catch **John Mayall's** set. He's back to a quartet (Lewis Richardson, James Smith, Steve Thompson — drums guitar, bass), which he's planning to keep together for three whole months! No fiddling, straight blues rock with lots of Bluesbreaker days echo, if not quite enough raunch. Everyone had a good time, the crowd loved it, knew the old songs, liked the new ones, and the band grooved steadily even if there was a certain amount of restraint. It was okay, though the "Pretty Woman" encore was Albert King's, not Roy Orbison's, and that was a keen drag *(this must be a Status Quo fan — Ed)*.

Dr. Feelgood followed. Back at the hotel earlier I'd seen this pale-faced angular degenerate occasionally materialising around the place but, y'know, I'd not taken much notice that it was Henry McCullough 'cos even Kevin Coyne could be spotted chat-

THE TOWN

ting amiably (it turned out he'd been on the bill, two o'clock, first on).

So . . . Feelgood stumble on stage and . . . gosh — no perfect replacement from Southend (John Mayo not yet having been announced), but McCullough! Dirty anorak, mucky red cords, hunched over his mammoth-body guitar like an overworked bus conductor, a look of perpetual fright on his face. His relatively easy-going guitar style transformed The Feelgoods into some sort of laid-back version of themselves.

Tim Hinkley's jazz-boogie piano did little to fortify proceedings.

Aw, what the heck, it was a cute novelty — farcically cute when, thankfully just the once, Henry jutted out on an ungainly sub-Wilko run. McCullough may have been a visual travesty but his was an heroic performance containing some fine solo contributions, and Hinkley's fill-outs were equally commendable — more so when you consider that the two had joined up with The Feelgoods only the day before.

It was a standard Feelgood set and the kids applauded warmly, slightly bemused. It was fun, as long as it doesn't happen again — know what I mean?

Back in their allocated dressing room, slight relief on faces, usual look of terror on McCullough's face, Steve Marriott steams in, cheery 'ello mates all round, proclaiming as to how he ain't never had the chance to tell all involved wot a great band The Feelgoods are, and where's that guy who plays like Johnny Pirate. He looks straight into McCullough's face: "Ohmigod, not you . . . where's the guitarist?"

That was the guitarist.

Oh, the embarrassment. "Hey look, I didn't realise . . . I didn't see you, I only heard you . . ." Marriott exits, head back, eyes heavenward, screaming "Oh! the embarrassment."

He was a very nervous guy before the gig, as were the rest of The Smalls. Their first genuine back together gig in public, now with Rick Wills on bass. Out front the nervous energy explodes into "Don't You Lie To Me" and "Whatcha Gonna Do 'Bout It" with thrilling power.

P. P. Arnold joins up for the third song and stays, so the as yet anonymous but tough newies come closer to hot and gospelly Humble Pie than any previous Faces conglomerate, with lots and lots of fire. They aren't as hookworthy or as potentially classy-pop as the oldies, but they aren't so redundant that they ruin the show.

It's not quite mere nostalgia.

There was a short and snappy "Itchycoo Park", a "Lazy Sunday" that had a thrusting close. "It's good to be together again," shouts Marriott. "This band's gonna be together for fuckin' years." That that would be a bloody good thing was demonstrated with their version of Womack's "Looking For A Love", which had me mentally registering J. Giels band comparisons — really.

They encored with "Tin Soldier", by public request, and there were even people dancing back stage, including John Mayall, who was having a rare old time. At the end of the "Soldier" still more was wanted; the band ran off, arms round each other like they'd all scored hat-tricks, and I bet there were tears in their eyes.

They were followed by **Harry Chapin,** whose well arranged, individually observed narrative songs were entertaining but misplaced on the night, tho' the kids loved them.

Then there was Status Quo.

Paul Morley

John Cale
Generation X
The Boys

ROUNDHOUSE

THE CRAZED WELSHMAN is back. He's gained some weight and looks healthy and confident, wearing a rugby shirt lest we forget. He's also found himself a new band, and this time there were no life-size plastic nurses for him to savage, just his repertoire of insinuating songs.

The scope of John Cale's activities are about as offbeat as can be. An avant-garde experimenter in the mid-'60s outfit Dream Syndicate (with Lamonte Young), and to varying degrees on all of his solo albums, he's also been an empathic producer for the Stooges and Patti Smith.

He has a knack for arrangement that is as theatrical as the BOC, and occasionally as crafted as Brian Wilson.

And lastly he's a devilish songwriter. After a false start on "Vintage Violence" he eventually found his songwriting feet on the much-acclaimed "Paris 1919".

"Paris 1919" was full of seductive little vignettes that lured you into a world of decadent and pastoral charm, with just a hint of the black humour that was to follow on the three Island albums.

Those three albums were twisted and beguiling; immaculately produced veneers that initially disguise, then highlight, Cale's fractured sensibilities. It wasn't simply the lyrics either. The musicians he was using, particularly Chris Spedding and Eno, were capable of underpinning him with a cold fluent precision.

Cale's new band is equally fluent, but they definitely aren't cold. They're a rock band — a very good, but very traditional, rock band. They're warm and effusive, and the sound is richer, denser and less harshly defined. They don't highlight Cale with such icy skill, but they respond to him a lot more; when Cale moved they moved with him, and when Cale floundered they just thrashed about.

"Helen Of Troy" was a sensible and obvious set opener — the cinematic marching feeling that the song conveys created just the right intensity, Cale standing stage centre flanked by guitarist Richie Fliegler on the left and Mike Visceglia and Bruce Brody (on bass and keyboards respectively) to the right. Joe Stefko was dwarfed and near invisible behind a massive array of tomtoms on the podium at the back of the stage, but he played firm, precise drums, unobtrusively pounding the music along.

They ran through an arbitrary collection of Cale's songs without either he or the band adding any new scope to the material, but generally more aggressive versions than before. "Antarctica" and "Paris 1919" suffered for it, whereas "Fear," "Darling I Need You", "Guts", "Dirtyass Rock'n'Roll" and the two new songs stood up to the treatment. But I still missed the cold edge and individuality that the Spedding band had given the songs.

Three quarters of the way into the set, though, and things picked up. Cale settled into his guitar after switching around from guitar to piano (apparently on the Monday he played fiddle too), and the band launched into "Leaving It All Up To You".

Cale's manic, emotionless voice started to gell with the band's aggression and the music took on a new character. The feeling that he was simply using a backing band was gone, and in its place was a harrowing mechanical intensity which sounded very much like the second side of Iggy's most recent offering.

As compelling as the old chilling Cale, but far more threatening.

Followed relentlessly by "Gun", the street paranoia of the lyrics came through darker and nastier than ever before, compounded by Fliegler's crazed, menacing slide solo. Then, without a break, they moved into "Pablo Picasso". The intensity didn't falter at all as Mike Visceglia's cranking bass drove the music inexorably onwards.

In fact, the only thing that faltered was Cale — he stumbled through the words, snarling (or as near as he'll ever get to snarling) what he could remember.

They finished it off with "Heartbreak Hotel", which Cale would probably have written himself had Presley and Co not done so back in '56. The dark, surreal lyrics suit him perfectly.

Those last four songs were the peak of the set. The encores which followed were spurious and shallow, and Cale looked visibly drained.

Worst of all was "Waiting For The Man", even more pointless than Lou Reed's later diminishings of it. Chris Spedding made a cameo appearance to trade blues licks on "Baby, What You Want Me To Do" and that about wrapped things up.

Cale's a strange performer. Never content to simply play his songs, he tries to redefine them each time and he doesn't care that it might not work or that it makes his performances erratic. During the earlier part of the set the band didn't respond to any challenge in the music, and he consequently wasn't able to draw much inspiration from them: the end result was lacklustre. But when there was some empathy the music came across with a vengeance — it's just a pity they couldn't keep it up throughout.

GENERATION X's bass player sported a telling comment on the whole Clash appearance / non-appearance scam in the form of a T-shirt with "Clash Were Never Booked" crayoned across the front. Cold comfort to the people outside wondering whether to go home disgruntled or hand over two notes and see if Gen X were any good.

Not much contest either way really — Gen X were up to standard but offered no real surprises. They simply confirmed their position as top of the second division in the new wave league. The music's right enough, Stooges derived adrenalin attack, uncluttered and forceful, and they know that there's an audible difference between playing like that and playing like that and meaning it. They play like they mean it.

Billy Idol's got a voice that singles him out pretty quickly, and looks to match. On stage he's like a cross between an animated Barbie doll and Billy Fury, except neither would move or sing so venomously and neither had peroxide hair.

The only problem is the songs — apart from "Ready Steady Go", which sounded like a cleverly contorted piece of Mod nostalgia — there just wasn't much grist. Songs like "Above Love" and "New Orders" seem to celebrate a kind of vogueish nihilism without attempting to put any perspective on it, and the result was predictably vacuous. Wait and see, as they say.

I almost forgot The Boys, which wouldn't have been difficult. They were punk predictable, lots of spiked hair, safety pins and leather and not much else. All form and no content. How they land a contract and Generation X don't is beyond me.

But take heart, their debut single has the following bit of succinct irony as the first line: *"I don't care about rock'n'roll"*. Enough said.

Paul Rambali

CALE mortified at receiving good review

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NATIONWIDE

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ABERDEEN Palace Ballroom: STRETCH
AYLESBURY Britannia: LEFT HAND DRIVE
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BEDFORD Angel Hotel: DAVE BURLAND
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BLACKBURN Lodestar: SAM APPLE PIE
BRADFORD Princeville Club: RADIATOR
BRIGHTON Dome: THE YETTIES
BRISTOL Granary: LEE KOSMIN BAND
BRISTOL Naval Volunteer: SPIDER
CARLISLE Market Hall: WIDOWMAKER
CLEETHORPES Winter Gardens: HERON
COVENTRY Mr George's: BETHNAL
CROYDON Fairfield Hall: "UNDER MILK WOOD" with STAN TRACEY QUARTET/DONALD HOUSTON
CROYDON Red Deer: DOWNLINERS SECT
EXETER Zhivago's: TICKLE
GALASHIELS Privateer: BAND FOR LIFE
GRIMSBY St James House: MARTIN SIMPSON
HIGH WYCOMBE Nags Head: LITTLE BOB STORY
HUDDERSFIELD Peacock Hotel: FRED JORDAN
HUNTINGDON R.A.F. Wittern: J.A.L.N. BAND
LEEDS Fforde Green Hotel: SHANGHAI
LIVERPOOL Empire Theatre: SMALL FACES
LIVERPOOL Eric's Club: JOHN CALE/COUNT BISHOPS/THE BOYS
LONDON BARNES Red Lion: FRED RICKSHAW'S HOT GOOLIES
LONDON BATTERSEA Arts Centre: ASCEND
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FRIDAY

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BRADFORD Star Hotel: ALLAN TAYLOR
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BRIGHTON Dome: MAX BOYCE/THERAPY
BRIGHTON Embassy Cinema: MEAL TICKET
BRIGHTON Top Rank: THE DRIFTERS
BRISTOL Naval Volunteer: TOO COMFORTABLE BY FAR
BURTON 76 Club: JENNY HAAN'S LION
CAMBRIDGE Corn Exchange: JUDAS PRIEST
CARDIFF Capitol Theatre: BRUCE FORSYTH
CARMARTHEN Trinity College: J.A.L.N. BAND
CHELMSFORD Chancellor Hall: JIMMY JAMES
CLWYD Red Lion Hotel: VIN GARBUTT
CROMER West Runton Pavilion: NUTZ/REMUS DOWN BOULEVARD
DUDLEY J.B.'s Club: SQUEEZE
EDINBURGH Carlops: THE HEROES
EDINBURGH University: WIDOWMAKER
EXETER St Luke's College: TOBY
HANLEY Victoria Hall: ERIC CLAPTON BAND/RONNIE LANE'S SLIM CHANCE
HARROW Technical College: KRAKATOA
HIGH WYCOMBE Nags Head: VISITOR 2035
HODDESDON The Crown: DAVE BURLAND
KENILWORTH Chesford Lion: JIMMY HELMS
KIDDERMINSTER College of Further Education: THE PIRATES
KIRKWALL Berstane Lodge Hotel: CHORDA
KNARESBOROUGH Folk Club: RICHARD PLANT
LARGS Barrfields Pavilion: BILLY CONNOLLY
LEICESTER Phoenix Theatre: OZO
LEIGHTON BUZZARD The Swan: HANDS OFF
LIVERPOOL Empire: BILLIE JO SPEARS/CARL PERKINS/DILLARDS
LIVERPOOL Eric's Club: LITTLE BOB STORY
LONDON ACTON Town Hall: ACKER BILK BAND
LONDON CAMDEN Brecknock: TROUPER
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: MIKE BERRY & THE ORIGINAL OUTLAWS
LONDON CAMDEN Music Machine: LIVERPOOL EXPRESS
LONDON Central Polytechnic: SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE McGHEE
LONDON COVENT GARDEN Rock Garden: BOOM-BAYA/WOODS BAND
LONDON COVENT GARDEN Roxy Club: SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS
LONDON DOWNHAM Saxon Tavern: STRIFE
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: BUSHWACKERS
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: STRUTTERS
LONDON Marquee Club: S.A.L.T.
LONDON National Theatre Foyer: MIKE WESTBROOK BAND
LONDON New Victoria Theatre: ROY HARPER & BLACK SHEEP/ALBION DANCE BAND
LONDON N.17 White Hart: MATCHBOX
LONDON PUTNEY White Lion: TIM BRANSTON'S RADIO
LONDON REGENT'S PK. Cecil Sharpe House: BOB DAVENPORT
LONDON SOUTHGATE Royalty Ballroom: FOUNDATIONS
LONDON WILLESDEN White Horse: FLIGHT 56
LONDON W.1. Speakeasy: ICE NICE
LONG CRENDON The Star: GARY & VERA ASPEY
LOUGHBOROUGH Town Hall: THE YETTIES
LUTON Technical College: MEDICINE HEAD
LUTON Unicorn: SIDEWINDER
MANCHESTER Electric Circus: SCORPIONS
MANCHESTER Free Trade Hall: JOHN CALE/COUNT BISHOPS/THE BOYS
NEWLAND LINCOLN Swiss Cottage: MARTIN SIMPSON
ORTON-ON-THE-HILL Unicorn: PETE QUIN
PURLEY Aosta: MARIAN MONTGOMERY
RETFORD Porterhouse: FLYING ACES
ROTHERHAM Tiffany's: TOPPER
RUSHDEN Wheatsheaf: WILD THING
SCARBOROUGH Penthouse: CHERRY VANILLA
SHEFFIELD City Hall: JAMES LAST ORCHESTRA
SOUTHEND Technical College: SHANGHAI
SOUTHEND Top Alex: WHARF RATS
SOUTHPORT Coronation Hotel: SEODA CEOIL
SOUTHSEA South Promenade Pier: FLYING SAUCERS
STAFFORD North Staffs Polytechnic: COUSIN JOE FROM NEW ORLEANS
SWINDON Wyvern Theatre: NEW SEEKERS
TAMWORTH Chequers Inn: STAGE FRIGHT
THATCHAM Hamilton Club: SOUL DIRECTION
TUNBRIDGE WELLS Assembly Hall: SYD LAWRENCE ORCHESTRA
WATFORD Cassio College: FUMBLE
WOLVERHAMPTON Lafayette: RADIATOR
WRIGHTINGTON Dicconson Arms: PETE & CHRIS COE
YORK University: ROOGALATOR

SATURDAY

ABERDEEN Capitol Theatre: ELLA FITZGERALD-/COUNT BASIE BAND
ACCRINGTON Lakeland Lounge: WALLS BLUES BAND
ALLERTON Crown Hotel: CADILLAC
ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE Tameside Theatre: DENNIS WATERMAN
AYR Gaiety Theatre: BILLY CONNOLLY
BANWELL Bell Inn: MARTIN CARTER & GRAHAM JONES
BARNET Duke of Lancaster: JERRY THE FERRET
BATLEY Town Hall: FRED JORDAN
BATLEY Variety Club: TAVARES
BEDFORD College of Further Education: THE MOTORS/HERON
BIRMINGHAM Barbarella's: JOHN CALE/COUNT BISHOPS/THE BOYS
BIRMINGHAM International Club: TRAX
BIRMINGHAM King's Heath Hare & Hounds: BROWNSVILLE BANNED
BIRMINGHAM Odeon: SMALL FACES
BRIGHTON Dome: BRUCE FORSYTH
BRISTOL Granary: S.A.L.T.
BRISTOL Naval Volunteer: GOOD QUESTION
COLCHESTER ABC Theatre: SHOWADDYWADDY
CORBY Nags Head: BETHNAL
COVENTRY Warwick University: STEFAN GROSSMAN/JOHN RENBOURN
CROMER West Runton Pavilion: FUMBLE
DUDLEY J.B.'s Club: JENNY HAAN'S LION
DUNSTABLE California: DETROIT SPINNERS/BRASS CONSTRUCTION
EDINBURGH Triangle Folk Club: MIKE WHELLANS
EXETER Zhivago's: LIVINGSTONE
FISHGUARD Frenchman's Motel: J.A.L.N. BAND
GLASGOW Apollo Centre: ERIC CLAPTON BAND/RONNIE LANE'S SLIM CHANCE
GLASGOW Strathclyde University: WIDOWMAKER-/CASPIAN/JOE'S DINER
GUILDFORD Surrey University: ROY HARPER & BLACK SHEEP/ALBION DANCE BAND
HASTINGS Pier Pavilion: JOHNNY THUNDER'S HEARTBREAKERS/NASTY POP
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD Pavilion: MAX BOYCE/THERAPY
HORNSEA Oceans Club: JOBE ST. DAY
IPSWICH Corn Exchange: NEW SEEKERS
IPSWICH Royal Exchange Club: ACKER BILK BAND
JACKSDALE Grey Topper: MEDICINE HEAD
KENILWORTH Chesford Lion: JIMMY HELMS
KETTERING Woodbine Club: STAGE FRIGHT
LEEDS International Club: SOUL DIRECTION
LEEDS Polytechnic: SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE McGHEE
LEICESTER De Montfort Hall: SYD LAWRENCE ORCHESTRA
LEICESTER Polytechnic: KRAKATOA/THE DARTS
LINCOLN Castle Club: REMUS DOWN BOULEVARD
LIVERPOOL Eric's Club: THE PIRATES
LONDON CAMDEN Brecknock: SLOWBONE
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: SHANGHAI/ARBRE
LONDON CAMDEN Music Machine: ALBERTO Y LOST TRIOS PARANOIAS/LAMPLIGHT
LONDON COVENT GARDEN Rock Garden: YAKETY YAK/BAZOOKA JOE
LONDON COVENT GARDEN Roxy Club: SIOUXIE & THE BANSHEES/VIOLATORS
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: LITTLE ACRE
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: BEES MAKE HONEY
LONDON KENSINGTON The Nashville: LITTLE BOB STORY/HOUSE
LONDON Marquee Club: THE JAM/STUKAS
LONDON New Victoria Theatre: ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION/MEAL TICKET
LONDON N.1 Weavers Arms: ONE HAND CLAPPING
LONDON N.11 Orange Tree: CRAZY CAVAN 'N' THE RHYTHM ROCKERS
LONDON PECKHAM Bouncing Ball: OZO
LONDON REGENT'S Pk. Cecil Sharpe House: DAVE BURLAND
LONDON STRATFORD Cart & Horses: WHARF RATS
LONDON W.1 Speakeasy: SPECIAL BREW
MANCHESTER Electric Circus: ROOGALATOR
MIDDLESBROUGH Rock Garden: CHERRY VANILLA
MIDDLESBROUGH Town Hall: FLYING ACES
MIDDLESBROUGH Town Hall Crypt: GEORGE MELLY & THE FEETWARMERS
MILTON KEYNES The Stables: BOB DAVENPORT
NORWICH Jacquard Club: HOT VULTURES
PENZANCE The Meadhouse: BILL CADDICK
PRESTON Guildhall: SACHA DISTEL
PURLEY Aosta: MARIAN MONTGOMERY
READING Bulmershe College: MOVIES
READING University: SQUEEZE
REDDITCH Waterside Club: HOOKER
SALTBURN Philmore Disco: DRIFTERS
SCUNTHORPE Baylis Hall: SWEET SENSATION
SCUNTHORPE Priory Hotel: RADIATOR
SHARPNESS Hotel: FLYING SAUCERS
SHEFFIELD Highcliffe Hotel: VIN GARBUTT
SOUTHEND Kursaal Ballroom: JUDAS PRIEST
STOWMARKET Sports Centre: FOUNDATIONS
TODMORDEN Bay Horse Inn: GYGAFO
WAKEFIELD Technical College: SCORPIONS
WARRINGTON Great Sankey Forum: JOHN OTWAY & WILD WILLY BARRETT
WATFORD Red Lion: SIDEWINDER
WIGAN Casino: STRIDER
WITHERNSEA Grand Pavilion: LIVERPOOL EXPRESS
WOKING Central Halls: EARL OF CANVEY
WOLVERHAMPTON Three Mile Oak: JAMESON RAID
WORTHING Down View: AMAZORBLADES
YORK Arts Centre: CUSTER'S LAST STAND

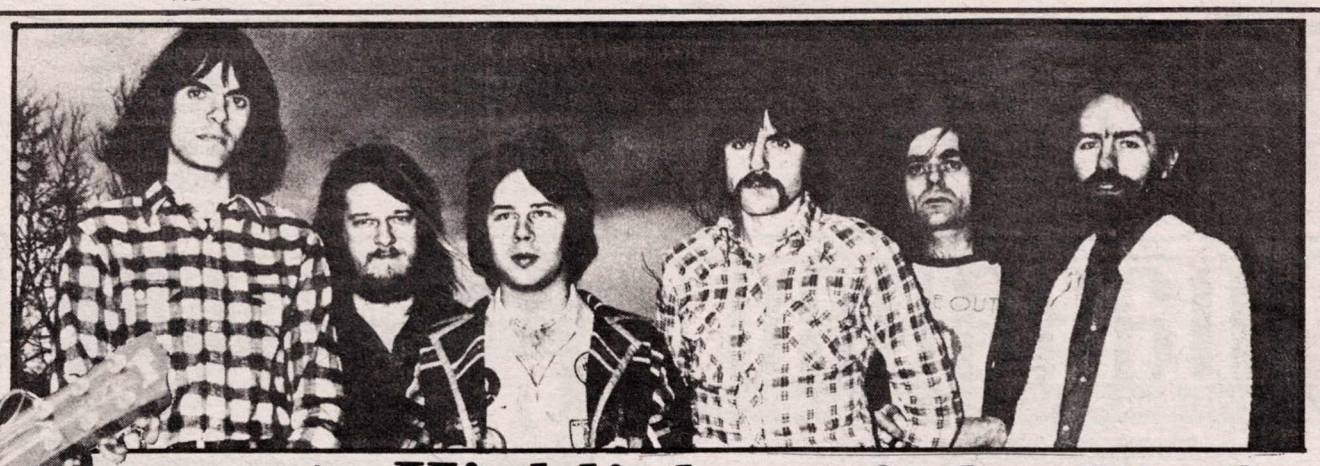
SUNDAY

ACCRINGTON Lakeland Lounge: SUNWHEEL
BARROW Maxim's Disco: CHERRY VANILLA
BEDFORD Nite Spot: DENNIS WATERMAN
BELFASTQueen's University: SASSAFRAS
BIRMINGHAMBarbarella's: BANDANA
BIRMINGHAMBarrel Organ (lunchtime): MENSCH
BIRMINGHAM Hippodrome: MAX BOYCE / THERAPY
BIRMINGHAM Railway Hotel: BULLETS
BLETCHELY Leisure Centre: SACHA DISTEL
BO'NESS Viewforth Hotel: THE HEROES
BOURNEMOUNTHWinter Gardens': BRUCE FORSYTH
BRIDGEND Cambrian Hotel: MARTIN CARTER & GRAHAM JONES
BRIGHTON Springfield Hotel: MARTIN SIMPSON
BRIGHTONTop Rank: BREEZE
BRISTOL Colston Hall: ROY HARPER & BLACK SHEEP / ALBION DANCE BAND
BRISTOL Dog House at the Stadium: SPIDER
BRISTOL Naval Volunteer: DETONATORS
CARDIFF Capitol Theatre: SMALL FACES
CASTLE DONINGTON Priest House: BERNARD WRIGLEY
COLNE Town Hall: ACKER BILK BAND
COVENTRY Theatre: BILLIE JO SPEARS / CARL PERKINS / DILLARDS
CREWE Brunswick Hotel: VIN GARBUTT
CROYDON Greyhound: JOHN CALE / COUNT BISHOPS / THE BOYS
GT. YARMOUTH Tiffany's: SHOWADDYWADDY
HARTLEPOOL Nursery Inn: RAY STUBBS
LEATHERHEAD Thorndike Theatre: KENNY BALL BAND
LEEDS Astoria Centre: GEORGE MELLY & THE FEETWARMERS
LEEDS Fforde Green Hotel: RADIATOR
LIVERPOOL Empire Theatre: DETROIT SPINNERS / BRASS CONSTRUCTION
LONDON CAMDEN Brecknock: SCARECROW
LONDON CHALK FARM Enterprise: ALEX ATTERSON
LONDON CHALK FARM Roundhouse: THE DAMNED / MOTORHEAD / ADVERTS
LONDON CLAPHAM Two Brewers: PAINTED LADY
LONDON DRURY LANE Theatre Royal: THE CHILITES
LONDON FINCHLEY Torrington: BOWLES BROS, BAND
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: BACK TO THE FRONT
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Odeon: PETER GABRIEL
LONDON KENNINGTON Oval House: ASCEND
LONDON KENSINGTON The Nashville: BEES MAKE HONEY
LONDON LEYTON Lion & Key: CRAZY CAVAN 'N' THE RHYTHM ROCKERS
LONDON Marquee Club: PLUMMET AIRLINES
LONDON New Victoria Theatre: TAVARES
LONDON NOTTING HILL Old Swan: AMAZORBLADES
LONDON Palladium: ELLA FITZGERALD / COUNT BASIE BAND
LONDON WOOLWICH Tramshed: JAKE THACKRAY
LONG EATON Ritz Cinema: THE PIRATES
MAIDENHEAD Skindles: JUDAS PRIEST
MANCHESTER Deanwater Hotel: PETE QUIN
MANCHESTER Royal Exchange Theatre: SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE McGHEE
NEWCASTLE City Hall: ERIC CLAPTON BAND / RONNIE LANE'S SLIM CHANCE
NEWMARKET Kingsway Cinema: PETE SAYERS
NOTTINGHAM Commodore Suite: THREE DEGREES
OXFORD New Theatre: NEW SEEKERS
PORTSMOUTH Tricorn Club: FOUNDATIONS
REDCAR Coatham Bowl: WIDOWMAKER
REDHILL Lakers Hotel: HOT POINTS
ROMFORD Albemarle Club: GRIND
ROTHESAY Pavilion: BILLY CONNOLLY
SHEFFIELD Brinkcliff Oakes Hotel: BOB DAVENPORT
SOUTHEND Queen's Hotel: HIERONYMOUS BOSCH
SOUTHPORT New Theatre: JAMES LAST ORCHESTRA
WHITSTABLE Duke of Cumberland: DAVE BURLAND
WIGAN Casino: SCORPIONS
WORCESTER Bankhouse: HOOKER
YORK Theatre Royal: SYD LAWRENCE ORCHESTRA

MONDAY

BIRMINGHAM Barrel Organ: MISPENT YOUTH
BIRMINGHAM Railway Hotel: ZETH
BOSTON Folk Club: DAVE & ARTHUR SHOWLER
BOURNEMOUTH The Village: JUDAS PRIEST
BOURNEMOUTH Winter Gardens: THREE DEGREES
BRADFORD Alhambra: SACHA DISTEL
BRISTOL Colston Hall: SMALL FACES
BURNLEY Cats Whiskers: SCORPIONS
CANTERBURY Kent University: THE PIRATES
CHIGWELL ROW Camelot Club: SOUNDS COUNTRY
COLCHESTER Mercury Theatre: ACKER BILK BAND
COVENTRY Lanchester Polytechnic: SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE McGHEE
COVENTRY Mr George's: MATCHBOX

Compiled by Derek Johnson



Pictured left: JOE WALSH, now a permanent member of the Eagles

Pictured top of the page: ROY HARPER and Black Sheep featuring (left to right) DAVE LAWSON, JOHN 'ADMIRAL' HALSEY, DAVE COCHRAN, ANDY ROBERTS, HENRY McCULLOUGH and ROY HARPER.

Highlights of the Week

SUDDENLY it's all happening again, with a cluster of major tours opening this week, and the aggregate number of gigs vastly increased. Here's a run-down of the main events during the next seven days:

● THE EAGLES have finally made it! After much dithering and uncertainty, they fly in to headline eight big concerts. The first four are at Wembley Empire Pool, starting on Monday. Needless to say, all tickets have long since been snapped up, but no doubt the touts will be out in force demanding their usual inflated prices. Support act is Val Carter. Gigs in Glasgow and Stafford follow next week.

● PETER GABRIEL brings his much-vaunted solo performance to Britain, kicking off in London at the Hammersmith Odeon on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. This will be the first time we've seen him on stage in this country since his last appearances with Genesis two years ago. A great deal of thought, effort and enterprise has gone into his solo venture, so we hope the end product meets with the approval it deserves.

● LOU REED, having apparently been turned down by the London Palladium, has settled instead for the New Victoria — where he begins a three-day season on Tuesday. These will be his only British dates during his extensive European tour, although he has talked vaguely of a longer visit later in the year. A few tickets are still available.

● FRANKIE VALLI and the Four Seasons have been enjoying a new lease of life during the past couple of years, so their latest British visit is certain to attract capacity houses. They start with a week's engagement at the London Palladium from Monday, followed by a string of provincial club and concert dates.

● TAVARES are one of the most consistent American acts in the singles charts, and have notched a sequence of hits over the last 18 months. Although slanted towards the MOTR fraternity, their previous brief visit shows that they have a slick and entertaining stage act. Their opening gigs are at Batley (Saturday), London (Sunday), Derby (Monday) and Birmingham (Tuesday).

● DETROIT SPINNERS have also built up a large following in this country. They open a British tour this weekend, and their audiences benefit from the bonus of another chart act as guest artists, BRASS CONSTRUCTION. First dates in the itinerary are at Birmingham (Friday), Dunstable (Saturday) and Liverpool (Sunday).

● ROY HARPER begins his rescheduled British tour tonight, after playing a couple of gigs in Ireland. He's confident that his health has improved sufficiently to carry him through his commitments — which is just as well, because he's working every night this week at Middlesborough (Thursday), London (Friday), Guildford (Saturday), Bristol (Sunday), Liverpool (Monday), Sheffield (Tuesday) and Glasgow (Wednesday). He's with his regular band, now officially known as Black Sheep instead of Chips.

● JUDAS PRIEST have been absent from the gig circuit for a lengthy period, but they are now making up for it by way of an extensive 25-venue tour. Initial gigs are at Cambridge (Friday), Southend (Saturday), Maidenhead (Sunday), Bournemouth (Monday), Cardiff (Tuesday) and Exeter (Wednesday).

● LITTLE BOB STORY seem to spend almost as much time in Britain as in their native France. They're here for yet another visit, starting in High Wycombe (Thursday), Liverpool (Friday), London (Saturday and Tuesday) and Cheltenham (Wednesday).

● KEVIN AYERS has also been out of the limelight for quite a while — about a year, by our calculations. But he's about to bounce back into action again when, supported by his regular backing band, he opens a British concert tour at Leicester on Wednesday.

● JOHNNY MATHIS received a shot in the arm at Christmas when his single "A Child Is Born" topped the charts. And that provides a big boost for his concert series, which includes a London Palladium week and opens in Portsmouth on Wednesday.

● ELLA FITZGERALD and COUNT BASIE always seem to blend together as tastefully as fish and chips. And jazz enthusiasts will welcome a reunion of these two near-legendary giants at Aberdeen (Saturday), London (Sunday), Manchester (Monday) and Southport (Tuesday).

● ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION are paying their first visit to Britain, for what was originally intended to be a one-off London concert on Saturday. But they've now also agreed to play a date in Oxford on Monday.

● ERIC CLAPTON began his tour yesterday (Wednesday), but space restrictions prevented us from doing it justice in last week's Gig Guide. So we're now taking time out to mention that, supported by Ronnie Lane's Slim Chance, he's at Manchester (Thursday), Hanley (Friday), Glasgow (Saturday), Newcastle (Sunday) and London Hammersmith (Wednesday).

GIG GUIDE

DERBY Bailey's: TAVARES
DONCASTER Outlook Club: RADIATOR
EDINBURGH Tiffany's: CAFE JACQUES NETHERBOW
ERDINGTON Queen's Head: QUILL
GLASGOW Kelvin Hall: JAMES LAST ORCHESTRA
HIGH WYCOMBE Nags Head: GEORGE MELLY & THE FEETWARMERS
ILFORD Cauliflower Hotel: ORIGINAL EAST SIDE STOMPERS
JORDANSTOWN Northern Ireland Polytechnic: SASSAFRAS
LIVERPOOL Empire Theatre: ROY HARPER & BLACK SHEEP / ALBION DANCE BAND
LONDON CAMDEN Brecknock: URCHIN
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: SPITERI
LONDON CAMDEN Music Machine: JENNY HAAN'S LION
LONDON COVENT GARDEN Rock Garden: S·A·L·T
LONDON COVENT GARDEN Roxy Club: CRAZY CAVAN 'N' THE RHYTHM ROCKERS
LONDON FULHAM Greyhound: KRAKATOA
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Odeon: PETER GABRIEL
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: TROGGS
LONDON KENSINGTON The Nashville: CUCKOO
LONDON Marquee Club: MOTORS / ELIZABETH BARACLOUGH
LONDON OXFORD ST. 100 Club: LEW LEWIS BAND / CLAYSON & THE ARGONAUTS
LONDON PUTNEY Half Moon: PAUL BRETT / JOHNNY JOYCE
LONDON WEMBLEY Empire Pool: EAGLES/VAL CARTER
MANCHESTER Free Trade Hall: ELLA FITZGERALD / COUNT BASIE BAND
ORPINGTON Royal Oak: SPREDTHICK
OXFORD Polytechnic: ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION
OXFORD Town Hall: JAKE THACKRAY
PAR Royal Hotel: BILL CADDICK
PLYMOUTH Top Rank: WARREN HARRY
ROTHERHAM Dickens Inn: GAFFA
STAFFORD Top Of The World: JOHN CALE / COUNT BISHOPS / THE BOYS
SUTTON COLDFIELD Good Hope Hospital Club: MUSCLES
TOLWORTH Toby Jug: DOWNLINERS SECT

TUESDAY

ABERDEEN Capitol Theatre: JAMES LAST ORCHESTRA
ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE Tameside Theatre: FIVEPENNY PIECE
BENFLEET Crooked Billet: TONY ROSE
BIRMINGHAM Barbarella's: SCORPIONS
BIRMINGHAM Four Oaks Crown: STAGE FRIGHT
BIRMINGHAM Hippodrome: TAVARES
BIRMINGHAM Railway Hotel: JAMESON RAID
BRIGHTON Top Rank: FLYING ACES
BRISTOL Colston Hall: TWIGGY
CANTERBURY Kent University: WIDOWMAKER
CARDIFF Top Rank: JUDAS PRIEST
CHESTERFIELD Aquarius: WURZELS
COLERAINE Ulster University: SASSAFRAS
DONCASTER Brewery Taps: HEDGEHOG PIE
EASTBOURNE Congress Theatre: SYD LAWRENCE ORCHESTRA
EDINBURGH Nicky Tam's: CASPIAN
EDINBURGH Tiffany's: THE HEROES
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD Great Harry: ARDAZELL
LANCASTER University: SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE McGHEE
LEICESTER Jazz Society: COUSIN JOE FROM NEW ORLEANS
LONDON CAMDEN Brecknock: HOT LINE
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: EATER
LONDON CAMDEN Music Machine: TRAPEZE
LONDON COVENT GARDEN Rock Garden: REMUS DOWN BOULEVARD / ELECTRIC CAT
LONDON FULHAM Golden Lion: KRAKATOA
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Odeon: PETER GABRIEL
LONDON HORNSEY Town Hall: JAKE THACKRAY
LONDON KENSINGTON The Nashville: JOHN STEVENS' AWAY
LONDON Marquee Club: HERON
LONDON New Victoria Theatre: LOU REED
LONDON OXFORD ST. 100 Club: LITTLE BOB STORY / HOOKER
LONDON PADDINGTON Western Counties: CHAMPION
LONDON PUTNEY Railway Hotel: DOWNLINERS SECT
LONDON S.W. 6 Lord Ranleigh: MISTER SISTER
LONDON WEMBLEY Empire Pool: EAGLES/VAL CARTER
MANCHESTER Chorlton The Oaks: SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS
NEWCASTLE University: STEVE BROWN BAND
NOTTINHAM Imperial Hotel: GAFFA
PORTSMOUTH Guildhall: NEW SEEKERS
PRESTON Guildhall: THREE DEGREES
SHEFFIELD City Hall: ROY HARPER & BLACK SHEEP / ALBION DANCE BAND
SOUTHPORT New Theatre: ELLA FITZGERALD / COUNT BASIE BAND
SWANSEA White Swan: MARTIN CARTER & GRAHAM JONES
SWINDON Brunel Rooms: XTC
WELWYN GARDEN CITY The Fountain: LOL COXHILL
WOLVERHAMPTON Polytechnic: PETE QUIN

WEDNESDAY

BIRMINGHAM Bogart's: FLYING ACES
BIRMINGHAM Railway Hotel: FUNKTION
BIRMINGHAM St Peter's College: MUSCLES
BOURNEMOUTH Winter Gardens: SACHA DISTEL
BRIGHTON Top Rank: WIDOWMAKER
BRISTOL Arts Centre: GOOD QUESTION
BRISTOL Bailey's: OSIBISA
BRYNMAWR Gwesty-Bach: MARTIN CARTER & GRAHAM JONES
BURTON Eves Disco: DEAD END KIDS
CHELTENHAM Pavilion Club: LITTLE BOB STORY
CHESTERFIELD Aquarius: WURZELS
CROYDON Fairfield Hall: BILLIE JO SPEARS CARL PERKINS / DILLARDS
DARLINGTON Incognito: KRAKATOA
EASTBOURNE Congress Theatre: NEW SEEKERS
EASTBOURNE The Lamb: SPREDTHICK
EDINBURGH Clouds: JOE'S DINER
EDINBURGH Usher Hall: JAMES LAST ORCHESTRA
EXETER University: JUDAS PRIEST
GLASGOW Apollo Centre: ROY HARPER & BLACK SHEEP / ALBION DANCE BAND
GRANGEMOUTH Hotel International: OTHER BAND
GUILDFORD King's Head: HOT VULTURES
HAYFIELD George Hotel: VIN GARBUTT
ILFORD Seven Kings: SWEET SENSATION
JACKSDALE Grey Topper: HEATWAVE
LEEDS New Star and Garter: CRAZY CAVAN 'N' THE RHYTHM ROCKERS
LEICESTER University: KEVIN AYERS BAND
LONDON CAMDEN Brecknock: MONTANA RED
LONDON CAMDEN Dingwalls: CAROL GRIMES & THE LONDON BOOGIE BAND
LONDON CAMDEN Music Machine: NUTZ
LONDON CHINGFORD Queen Elizabeth: JERRY THE FERRET
LONDON COVENT GARDEN Rock Garden: MOVIES / SILENT SISTER
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Odeon: ERIC CLAPTON / RONNIE LANE'S SLIM CHANCE
LONDON HAMMERSMITH Red Cow: TOOTING FROOTIES
LONDON ISLINGTON Hope & Anchor: CRAZY CAVAN 'N' THE RHYTHM ROCKERS
LONDON KINGSWAY Sound Circus: SCORPIONS
LONDON Marquee Club: GRYPHON
LONDON New Victoria Theatre: LOU REED
LONDON PADDINGTON Fangs Disco: J.A.L.N. BAND
LONDON Rainbow Theatre: SMALL FACES
LONDON STOKE NEWINGTON Rochester Castle; BUSTER CRABBE
LONDON WEMBLEY Empire Pool: EAGLES/VAL CARTER
LONDON W1 Gulliver's Club: ROKOTTO
NEWPORT Roundabout Club: JOHNNY THUNDER'S HEARTBREAKERS
NOTTINGHAM Beeston Three Horseshoes: PETE & CHRIS COE
NOTTINGHAM Isabella Two: GEORGE MELLY & THE FEETWARMERS
PLYMOUTH Sam's Club: COUSIN JOE FROM NEW ORLEANS
PLYMOUTH Top Rank: DARTS
PORTSMOUTH Guildhall: JOHNNY MATHIS
PORTSMOUTH Polytechnic: REMUS DOWN BOULEVARD
SOUTH WOODFORD Railway Bell: ORIGINAL EAST SIDE STOMPERS
STRATTON Tree Inn: BOB DAVENPORT
SWINDON The Affair: CHERRY VANILLA
WORCESTER Bankhouse: ZETH
YORK University: SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE McGHEE

RESIDENCIES

BATLEY Variety Club: FREDDIE STARR Week from Sunday
BIRMINGHAM King's Club: COOL BREEZE Wednesday (27) for four days
BIRMINGHAM La Dolce Vita: THE CHIMES Week from Monday
BIRMINGHAM Night Out: JACK JONES Monday for two weeks
BLACKBURN Cavendish: THE CHIMES Thursday for three days
BLACKPOOL Gaiety Bar: DAVE BERRY Week from Monday
BRISTOL Crockers: PLANETZ Monday for three days
DERBY Bailey's: HEATWAVE Sunday for three days
HARROGATE Gallop Inn: FOUNDATIONS Week from Monday
LEICESTER Bailey's (doubling DERBY Bailey's): CHI-LITES Thursday for three days
LIVERPOOL She Club: SHABBY TIGER Thursday for three days
LONDON Palladium: FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS Week from Monday
LUTON Cesar's: THE STYLISTICS Week from Monday
NEWCASTLE La Dolce Vita (doubling SOUTH SHIELDS Tavern): PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS Week from Monday
OLDHAM Bailey's: GLEN CURTIN BAND Week from Monday
SHEFFIELD Bailey's' TERRY WEBSTER & DICTIONARY Thursday for three days
STOKE Bailey's: POLLY BROWN Thursday for three days
WAKEFIELD Theatre Club: THE DRIFTERS Week from Sunday
WATFORD Bailey's: THE CHI-LITES Week from Monday
WIGAN Riverside Club: JIMMY HELMS Week from Monday

TV RADIO

THE KINKS, currently being featured in the NME, are also the star attraction on the box this week. BBC-2's **"Old Grey Whistle Test"** devotes the whole of Tuesday's show to Ray Davies & Co. in concert at the BBC-TV theatre.

WEATHER REPORT and **John McLaughlin's SHAKTI** are the two bands showcased in **"Jazz From Montreux"** (BBC-2 Friday). Hardly jazz in the traditional sense, maybe — but certainly both acts should grab NME readers.

KEVIN COYNE is the subject of **"Star Rider"** screened by London ITV late on Thursday. But as we've previously pointed out, different editions of this series are cropping up in other regions at various times through the week.

THE McGARRIGLES, Kate and Anna, star in the second of Granada's **"So It Goes Concerts"** on Sunday. But only some ITV regions have opted to screen it, while other viewers —— including those in London — are missing out.

GEORGE HAMILTON IV, Lynsey De Paul & Mike Moran and **Vera Lynn** are the guests in **"The Val Doonican Music Show"** (BBC-1 Saturday).

TONY BLACKBURN hosts this week's **"Top Of The Pops"** (BBC-1 Thursday).

ROD STEWART's chart-topper again introduces the highly-acclaimed documentary series **"Sailor"**, Episode Three of which is repeated by BBC-1 on Friday.

THE MUPPETS are now being repeated by most ITV regions on either Saturday or Sunday.

"ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE" (ITV network Saturday) this week turns its attention to Country music, in an episode subtitled "Making Moonshine". Among artists featured on film are **Jimmie Rodgers, Roy Acuff, Doug Kershaw, Jimmy Driftwood, Ernest Tubb, Tex Ritter, Bill Anderson, Minnie Pearl** and **Webb Pierce.**

T. REX, Blue and **Koffee 'n' Kreme** guest in "Get It Together" (ITV network Wednesday).

ROBBIE VINCENT, who normally operates on BBC Radio London, takes over Radio 1's 5.30-6.30pm spot on Saturdays to present the best of soul and disco music.

STUART GRUNDY again hosts the **"Rock On"** magazine (Radio 1, 1.30pm Saturday).

THE STRANGLERS and **Dave Edmunds' ROCKPILE** are showcased **"In Concert** (Radio 1, 6.30pm Saturday).

MONTY PYTHON's first series continues its repeat run, followed immediately by a repeat of the **SPIKE MILLIGAN** series **"Q6"** (both BBC-2 Monday).

LIVE PAGE

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DAMNED IN AMERICA

The Damned
CBGB

EARS BLEEDING, minds boggled, and dumb struck, the crowds filed out of CBGB's after witnessing The Damned's Easter weekend carnage. Having banged out their first ever set in the US, the band were collapsed in a heap of chains, leather, knives and mascara in a dressing-room the size of Jimmy Page's stage monitor. The impression they'd made on the predominantly white and uptight throng was almost unforgettable, and not unlike getting run over by herd of yaks.

Earlier the good Captain Sensible had annihilated his bass guitar and microphone in one fell swoop, smashing said equipment into walls and people, causing the set to be halted to give the roadies time to repair the damage.

The Damned's brand of ear acupuncture and Dr. Calagari-esque visuals courtesy of Mr. Vanian, combined with mid-air collision course energy, was completely unexpected by the hip New York posers gathered there at four bucks a throw. Twice nightly, for four days, The Damned played to packed houses, and in the estimation of most of the people I spoke to, they never stunk the joint out and got an average eight on a scale of ten.

John Rockwell of the *New York Times,* on the other hand, wasn't convinced. He saw fit to describe The Damned as an "outre avant garde experience", but allowed that it had its "definite charms".

The Damned figured to lose about 500 nicker on this venture, what with CBGB's being the only gig on the "tour" when they started out. Now a couple of dates in Boston have been added, and the Whiskey in L.A. have them with Television.

The labels were out in full force, with CBS and Sire showing almost as much interest as the groupies.

Joe Stevens

. . . AND IN CYNICAL SCOTLAND:
Gan hame en lurrn tae play, laddie — ye cannae fool us!

The Damned
EDINBURGH

THIS IS WHAT all the fuss is about? Amazed, I flick through back issues of NME with increasing incredulity. All these good reviews for this load of pinhead appeal garbage? Even Steve Clarke too — can't trust anybody these days!

Pardon me for being so naive, but I always thought an element of skill was a prerequisite for a band. The vinyl artefacts are quite enjoyable but any fool knows what a multitude of sins you can cover in a studio. What we have here is one gigantic bluff, which no one seems brave or foolish enough to challenge, scared perhaps of being dismissed as old by those who wave the power chord like some kind of virility symbol.

What exactly did the punters get for their money? A total of 35 minutes — encore included — of ultrafast, jerry built, power chord numbers, each very similar to the last, delivered at breakneck pace to a bemused crowd consisting mainly of the curious. Most seemed appalled by what they found, and a steady exodus began during the third number.

They had a certain rough charm up to a point (the third number) and had I been zonked I could conceivably have got off on the energy level. But good musicians? How can anyone tell at that speed? A go faster stripe is all they deserve.

And four letter words — how trendy. And setting cymbals on fire too! How terribly, terribly original. Must be all of seven years since Hendrix did that. Was that the youth in revolt bit? And the violence — sure they didn't actually incite the fighting that broke out, but neither did they make any attempt to stop it, apparently preferring to, er, feed off the energy. Just wait till we get the first punk band casualty and *then* we'll see what's what in the violence stakes *(Ah, where's your cynicism, Ian? Like Gen X's bottled bassist, they'll just be "martyrs" at the hands of "hippies" — Ed).*

Punk bashing? You'd like to think so perhaps. But no — it's just the cold light of day. I'll give them time to grow, sure, and I'll be watching. But let's not make great claims for this sheep in wolf's clothing. I really fail to see why punks should have a different set of rules or criteria from everybody else. As if dazzled by energy, the critical faculties seem to get suspended.

Any group, it appears, can form in London, have energy if minimal talent, call itself new wave, and secure a rave review and a recording deal in next to no time. But meanwhile outside London, working groups making good music have to scrape by on a fraction of what this lot got for 35 minutes for their own hour plus sets. Something very wrong there.

New Wave? New wave of what? The Sex Pistols look to be the most manipulated group since The Monkees. Or rather, The Rollers — substitute Malcolm MacLaren for Tam Paton and safety pins for tartan and where's the real difference? Rough side, smooth side — the coin comes down in the businessman's hand just the same. Meanwhile, I'll take my Alice Cooper unrecycled, thank you.

Now I think all this energy is really fine. New groups, magazines — great. A self-made movement (like the Mods back in prehistory) with clothes, etc, that aren't too dependent on business exploitation for identity — excellent. A do-it-yourself movement. And that's what punk rock is — do-it-yourself rock. And pretty terrible it is too. A rush of energy may be fun, but it sure ain't the whole story.

And if the Damned are the best, what, dear God, are the worst like?

Ian Cranna

Jack The Lad
BRISTOL

I WASN'T SURE what to expect from Jack The Lad, but as soon as that old favourite "Gentleman Soldier" took command of my toes I knew it was a nice night. It's one of the more robust traditional songs anyway, but when the rhythms come ratatattat from Ray Laidlaw (drums) and Phil Murray (bass), you find you're reaching for your box of "high-grade HM" epithets. This is folk-Rock rather than Folk-rock.

The best things about their performance, however, are the pure and simple beams of warmth and happiness which radiate continually from the stage. Don't get me wrong — I'm as truculently determined to be as mean and miserable as the next punk on these occasions, but we all have to let our hair down (drat! — that's done my cognito in) now and again.

One of their own songs, "Amsterdam", had t'Lad playing like a more aggressive Strawbs as Billy Mitchell (guitar, banjo and lead vocals) switched from nasal cantillation to a Cousins-type rasp. This rocked straight into another trad number, "The Ballad Of Captain Grant", featuring some good four-part vocal harmonies.

A swinging shot of C&W entitled "Steamboat Whistle Blues" brought some nifty picking from the broad and bearded frame of Walter Fairbairn (guitar, mandolin, fiddle) who, incidentally, looks like he's fallen off an Allman Bros album sleeve. Having performed that they leave the stage, only to return in cheapo cheapo ManTran gear for a droll acapella doowop rendition of "King Of Your Heart".

While the band changed, Mitchell performed a nondescript McTellish solo song, but on the return of the others things soon picked up with another country rocker called "Hitpicks, Hotshots, Wet Knix And Pisspots" dedicated to Tony Blackburn and cleverly incorporating Radio One jingles, sounding overall like early Kursaals.

From this point it was non-stop rocking, rolling, jigging and reeling, everyone dancing since it's impossible to resist Fairbairn's fiddle. Another cute touch: during the last number they all stop playing while the music goes on (a clandestine tape, see) and it takes a few minutes before all the wildly prancing audience realise they've gone.

The encore starts with Fairbairn's mandolin preceding the sudden appearance of the other three wearing helmets and shaking shovels as they daintily trip the ancient and intricate steps of "The Miners Dance".

Recently settling in with a new record company (Decca) has given Jack The Lad a fresh injection of enthusiasm, and these canny Geordies are currently guaranteed to make you smile. Go see.

David Housham

Asleep At The Wheel
HAMMERSMITH

FIGURING I'D PULLED this gig for the saxophones and not — shucks — for my blueberry pies, I broke out the beret to cosset the critical faculties and packed a corn pone in a fresh gingham bandanna for the inner man. In the event, Asleep At The Wheel combined so many musical categories that I found myself absently nibbling a swatch from the beret, while the faithless pone jumped the broomstick with a sweet-talkin' drummer from San Antone.

Tarnation! If they didn't bushwack the old Count Basie warhorse, "Jumpin' At The Woodside", a sight more raggedy than that chromium turbine, but swinging and sincere and not offered as the wax fruit of camp revival. The lightness and skip of the Basie rhythm section came from the fiddlers, who wove a shuddery silver thread into the ensemble chug. The two saxes are into different bags, Link Davis Jr. taking controlled, churningly circular liberties, while Taco Ryan opted for the wide-open vowels of Free, which occasionally got away from him. From the stand-up slap bass to the train whistle sax and clarinet — ill woodwind that nobody blows any good — their period flavours were always affectionate.

Hootenanny swing, daddy

The classic Joe Turner-Pete Johnson "Roll 'Em Pete" — here "Roll 'Em Floyd" — was a healthy bounce and boogie all the way down to the final "well all reet then, well all reet then" boss-hollered coda. Singer Ray Benson did a fair job, though he hasn't the locomotive-heavy projection of the blues shouters. Numbers like "Am I High", with its Phil Harris laconics, fit him better, and country numbers, "Miles And Miles Of Texas" for example, suit that slowpoke baritone to a T-bone. The accompaniment, like extras in a John Wayne movie, carry the melody that the monolithic centre can't bend to.

The female counterpart, on the other hand, is all sob at the centre, emotion located somewhere in the nasal chambers. Chris O'Connell's versions of "Nothing Takes The Place Of You" and "I Wonder" had me applying the gingham bandanna to the moist orbs and murmuring about the potency of cheap music. "My Baby Thinks She's A Train" shared the same branch line as the Old Loinster's "Mystery Train", gulped lyric, flat boxcar blat of rhythm.

The eleven-piece outfit is capable of great textural variety apart from the obvious twinning of guitars, fiddles and saxes. Double bass and rhythm guitar give a pneumatic bounce of great jollity to the devotional "Somebody Stole His Body", evoking images of Dolly Parton covering bumpy terrain rather than the Resurrection of the iced Christ. The Cajun feature for Link Davis' accordian poled all the way up the bayou, moss on the trees and globe lanterns winking from the landings. Towards the end, guitarist Albert Lee from Emmylou Harris' band sat in and ran a few chuckling runs that flabbergasted the audience. They flabbergast easy.

A good professional band, high spirits, high pommel, hi fellas, I'd plumb admire to see you again, y'heah.

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ELO: Fugue, wot a scorcher!

Cantata to the top

ELO

TORONTO

IN A CONTEST to design a rock superstar, Jeff Lynne would look like a non-starter.

Onstage at Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens he's dwarfed by his sprawling Afro, which has added another storey since he was last in Britain. He's also swapped his trademark guru suit for a cute little number in green satin, giving him the appearance of an off-colour Gary Glitter.

Then there's that Brummy accent. Flat enough to turn Mitchell's and Butler's into Real Ale.

But appearances are deceptive. The evidence of ELO's latest tour of the Americas is that Lynne is poised to move into the Elton John bracket.

Tour is perhaps not quite the word. It's more like a triumphal procession. ELO have settled firmly into the sports stadium league, with the success of "A New World Record" and its attendant singles. And that's mostly due to Lynne.

He mixes strong melody and hard rock in about the same proportion that Elton used to, but ELO's distinctive instrumental line-up gives him an extra edge.

Lynne's repertoire is now so extensive that there are no soft spots in the stage act. It's a terse performance of all those hit singles, plus the hottest songs from the most recent albums. No matter how complex a cut may seem on an album, the band have the capacity to deliver the goods live.

Naturally, the golden oldies are fondly received, notably "Can't Get It Out Of My Head", "Showdown" and "Evil Woman". But it's the new stuff that gets the most fevered response. "Throw Me Down A Line" is the first up, and, in its live state, displays treble the energy output of the album version.

And in front of 20,000 people, "Telephone Line" confirms its own potential as a classic. Lynne's opening line — a plaintive *"Hello, how are you?"* — gets a huge roar from the crowd. The doo-wop chorus is a little rough in places, but no way a wrong number.

"Living Thing" is immaculately rendered, though overshadowed by "Rockaria". Bassist Kelly Groucutt stands in for the Glyndebourne soprano, but the song is much more than an elaborate musical joke. Lynne has come up with a successor to "Roll Over Beethoven" that is even more of a celebration. He really shows off his prowess as a hard edged lead guitarist with that juggernaut riff. The kids surge to their feet en masse.

The re-working of "Do Ya" is even more potent. A sharp reminder of the ease with which Lynne upstaged Roy Wood in the last days of the Move.

The solo spots by Hugh MacDowell and Mik Kaminski have been restructured and refined since the last tour. MacDowell's cello work-out is weirder than ever. Endless discords that nevertheless make coherent sense, plus oddball changes in sound. How you make a cello sound like a blues harp or a gypsy violin is anyone's guess.

The band's elaborate laser beam lighting is put to extraordinary effect during MacDowell's routine. Aimed directly at the cello strings, the beams dance in a grotesque frenzy.

"Ma Ma Belle" is the closer, with Bev Bevan stamping out the big beat, and the crowd stamping right along with him. The inevitable encore is "Roll Over Beethoven". Lynne heats up rock's most famous riff until it buckles and distorts, and Richard Tandy adds all those pointed classical quotes.

ELO's act must be the least self-indulgent around. Not a punch is pulled, not a song played for less (or more) than it's worth. No exploding egos are allowed to devastate musical commitment.

Outside the closed circle of boogie bands and heavy metal commandos, it's hard to see who can offer the ELO any serious competition.

Bob Edmands

Jack Bruce Band

NEW VICTORIA

NO MATTER HOW great he is musically, particularly on record, there is always the worry that Jack Bruce will blow his tricks on stage. In the past 17 years, probably playing with as many bands, he's made his fair share of goofs: often choosing unsuitable sidekicks and then having to pacify reckless egos, or simply being tyrannical, thinking he could crack his musos skulls together until they played in a manner he considered acceptable.

Now, back on the stage after an 18-month exile, he has discovered in Hughie Burns (guitar), Tony Hymas (keyboards) and Simon Phillips (drums), musicians who can interpret, and are technically gifted enough to be able to play his music. And on occasion they were not at all reluctant to shove Bruce to the back and steal some of the limelight for themselves.

Jack apparently enjoys this type of relationship.

They illustrated just how superbly they play over two sets (separated by a bomb hoax when the theatre was cleared) amounting to over 135 minutes of music. And ironically their only major flob was failing to perform Cream's "Born Under A Bad Sign" efficiently: it was a dead duck floating conspicuously among an otherwise impressive collection of songs.

They played a total of 18 numbers, which included all but two of the ten tracks from "How's Tricks", and involved frequent dips into material on his solo sets "Songs For A Tailor", "Harmony Row" and "Out Of The Storm". If nothing else, that represented value for money.

Unlike other bands who can only break the two-hour barrier by desperate improvisation and repetition, each piece from Bruce and friends was performed with tasteful economy.

But there was none of the usual introversion associated with *serious* rock musicians, who invariably create a dank atmosphere, playing for themselves rather than the audience.

Bruce's own presence was excellent not only because he is a wonderfully passionate vocalist and superb bassist, but because he was enthusiastic. He dashed around the stage in jubilation, joked with the capacity house, and did his most to encourage Burns, Hymas and Phillips.

The Burns and Hymas relationship was consistently productive. In style they differ greatly: the guitarist enjoyed the odd frenetic plunge into brisk, snappy lines influenced by the blooze, whereas Hymas's classical background was usually evident with his mellow, thoughtfully constructed melody lines. Yet the contrast they created was welcome, especially when passing solo spots to each other, particularly on the instrumental "Spirit".

Meanwhile Bruce was laying down the weights to the helter-skelter of musical dexterity with Phillips: a dynamite rhythm combination with the kid drummer proving just how tremendous he is with a long and loudly applauded solo during "Pieces Of Mind".

After playing a selective history of his solo music, and obviously appreciative of the audience's ecstatic response, Bruce completed the concert with a tribute to some of the "great players" he'd performed with, and immediately launched into his reading of Cream's "Sunshine Of Your Love". The encore was yet another reminder of his roots: the excellent 12-bar blues from "How's Tricks", "Waiting For The Call".

Was it a mishearing on my part, or was the very last vocal he sang the triumphant cry, "I'm back!"

Tony Stewart

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The Stranglers Cherry Vanilla The Jam

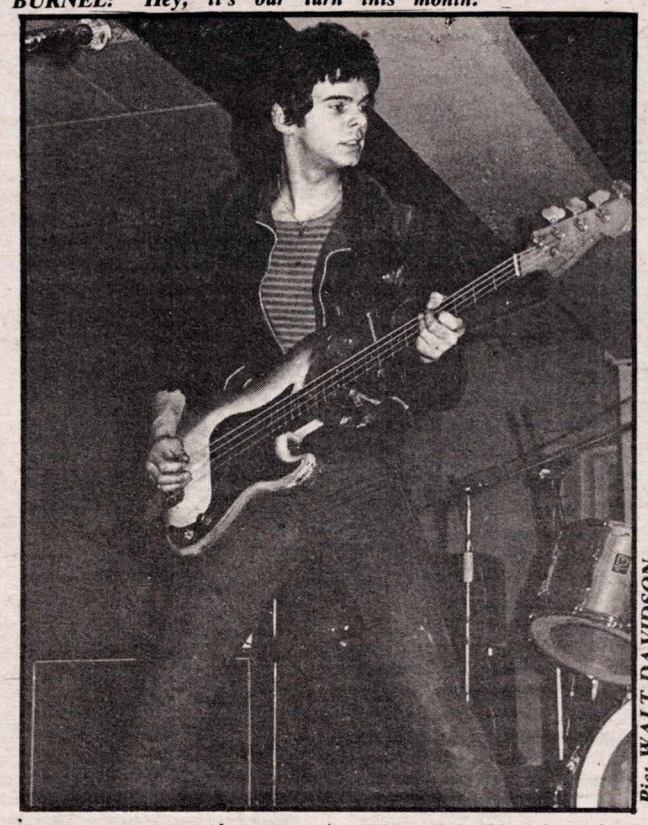
ROUNDHOUSE

THE JAM WERE scarcely halfway through their set at half past six when the geezer at the door of the Roundhouse told the 300-plus still stranded outside that there were only a hundred tickets left to be sold. Surprising, I thought, as last week John Cale hadn't even filled the place.

The Stranglers, it gradually became apparent throughout the evening, are very much the dark horses of the new wave hoopla.

Not only have they produced arguably the best album to appear from out of this whole circus, but their pulling power is such that it can outstrip even an ex-Velvet Underground acolyte on their first large-scale bill-topping London gig. (Either that or the previous Sunday the New Wave fans were too intent on witnessing the second stretch of Lew Grade's *Jesus Of Nazareth* on Easter TV).

Anyway, the Roundhouse was packed to the cracks with a rather unsettling ratio of benign old hippie types *(You looking for bother? — Ed.)* and the doyens of all-purpose "now"-ness — which meant mainly spotty looking types in a motley uniform salvaged from equal quotients of mod and rocker drag circa the old Brighton beach barney era. Not that you could tell the difference looking down from upstairs.



BURNEL: "Hey, it's our turn this month."

Pic: WALT DAVIDSON

Back to The Jam, though. They're great. Simple as that. Any 18-year-old kid who takes pride in playing an old bright red 6-string Rickenbacker (a pox on all yer Telecasters and Les Pauls, now this is a *guitar)* and plays it well, even ringing out various feedback squeals at the end of every number, is more than alright in my code of rock lore.

In fact, The Jam impress me enough for me to envisage them taking over where The Feelgoods left off (not that The Jam ape The 'Goods, by the way), substituting youthful exuberance for some of that band's more idiosyncratically successful stunts.

The Jam, anyway, are superbly tight at virtually all times, each member juxtaposing his instrumental drive against the others for maximum effect, everything strictly in tune, harmonies always right on pitch. "In The City", their single, is still the best number in their repertoire; sometimes in their usurping of old numbers, specifically "Ride Your Pony" and "Sweet Soul Music", they forfeit too much of the song's real power in the name of speed.

But I'd rather see The Jam any day than any number of attitude fetishists, if only because they've bothered to put the music first — and as such they will survive long after the "I'm So Bored With . . ." merchants have scurried back to their parents' houses in Wanstead.

Cherry Vanilla is really a bit of a joke — at least to yours truly, who has the dubious distinction of recalling her as publicist for Mainman, when she was a butt for all manner of evil jokes courtesy of Iggy Pop and James Williamson.

Onstage at the Roundhouse, Ms Vanilla did try very hard, aided by a surprisingly adept band whose musical savvy was only parallelled by the heinous nature of their posing. The guitarist looked like he was giving birth every time he amped out a solo, gritting his teeth like he was in mortal combat with a bull-worker, while the pianist looked simply like a primping queen throughout.

Vanilla's repertoire is all Stones-riffs and upfront horny posing, but her style is ultimately almost cautious, apologetic . . . and so hard-working that one almost wanted her to be granted an encore (she was), even at the cost of having to sit through more arch posing and torso-bracing.

Finally The Stranglers came, saw and conquered. The last time I'd seen them was exactly the same spot well over a year ago, when they'd put virtually everyone's backs up with a dire set of surrogate Doors/Velvets soundalike songs with uniformly crummy lyrics.

This time they kicked off with the hypnotic "Sometimes", my favourite single track from the entire recorded works of the new wave (and if you think that's jive then just consider that I'd prefer to hear an inspired Doors rip-off than an uninspired Ramones rip-off any day, OK?). The sound was thick and Gothic heavy, losing some of its doomy momentum due to the way is seemed weighted down at times.

Much of their repertoire was as impressive as it was unfamiliar — a new song called "I Feel Like A Wog" being most decidedly so. More semi-established works like "Peaches" and "Ugly" were performed with a slide show lacking any real extra-dimensional power, while "Down In The Sewer" sounded even better than on record.

The only possible quibbles would be the occasional forced "heaviness" of their rhetoric (minimal) and bass player Jean Jacques Burnel's leg movements (forgettable). Otherwise, they are musically probably the best new wavers around right now. One can only hope for competition. Fast.

Nick Kent

RATS UP FROM THE SEWER

Stranglers cop top punk verdict

Atlanta Rhythm Section

PITTSBURGH

ARS ARE SIX southern good ole boys who've worked as a group for 6 years (although their individual careers are at least twice as long), recording 6 albums before finally socking the public eye with "So Into You", currently coasting high on the American charts at No. 6 as I write.

Despite the generally easy pace and clean cut of their records, on stage they're predominantly hard, heavy and distorted — perhaps a little too much for their own good. To fully appreciate their act it's a great help if you're already familiar with their material and are not hoping to hear too much of lead singer Ronnie Hammond. The rest of the group think he's ace. They're probably right, but I wouldn't stake a judgement either way on the basis of the two concerts I saw in Pittsburgh.

Likewise, except for a couple of lyrical intros, Dean Daughtry's keyboard work was absorbed in the confederate blanket of sound and Robert Nix's drumming was seen and partially heard rather than felt. There was a lot of action up at the back, which might have been impressive had it not been so diffuse. There again, I'm coming from the soul side, where the rhythm sections are usually tight and on top.

ARS's drive unit is in the front line, where lead guitarist Barry Bailey (one helluva player, even if he did occasionally repeat himself), rhythm guitarist J. R. Cobb (who also took a a couple of fine solos and shared a talking-guitar dialogue with Bailey) and the extraordinary Bunter figure of bassist Paul Goddard (who received standing ovations on both nights for his finger-snapping solo) jam together in a supercharge of ballsy boogie.

Not being a longstanding fan of the group, I can't detail their whole repertoire — nevertheless it was apparent that they're fully rehearsed in most of their recordings, since they spontaneously changed the playlist between gigs. I recognised "Doraville" and "Angel" (from the "Third Annual Pipe Dream" album), "Jukin" (from "Red Tape") and "Sky High" (from their latest, "A Rock And Roll Alternative").

Naturally it was "So Into You" that brought the already cheering audiences to their feet, but the group don't make too big a thing of it, slipping the hit into the middle of their act before building to equal reaction with older and wilder material.

If you take your rock with a slug of something rough and ready, no doubt you'll get high on ARS too when they hit the country this week.

Cliff White

JAZZ DIARY

ELLA & BASIE are at the London Palladium on 24th April; Manchester's Free Trade Hall on 25th; Southport on 26th; the Royal Festival Hall on 30th and Bournemouth on 1st May.

Down Oxford Street's 100 Club, the shyly titled **World's Greatest Jazz Band** with **Yank Lawson, Bob Haggart** and vocalist **Maxine Sullivan** are wailing on 23rd. **Champion Jack Dupree,** after a non-appearance, will definitely be on in June - 10th, 11th, 12th. **Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee** are at Central Poly on 22nd.

The Union Jazz Club, Rotary Street, S.E.1, has the **Mick Collins Big Band** on 25th April. The Rock Garden, scene of Sunday jazz jam sessions, has **Ascend** on 26th. The Phoenix features jazz-rock outfit **Landscape** on 27th, and the 7 Dials has the **Dick Heckstall-Smith Quintet** the following night.

The programme of Jazz & Blues Films continues at the ICA Cinema with *Along The Old Man River* starring **Terry & McGhee & Bukka White,** plus *A Way To Escape The Ghetto* with **Willie Dixon, B. B. King** and **Arthur Crudup.** On 25th *Black, White & Blues* with **Muddy, Champion Jack, Alexis Korner** and **Roosevelt Sykes.**

Bristol guitarist **Frank Evans** seems to be getting a lot of deserved airplay for his album, "Noctuary" on Blue Bag. A delicate, original player, Evans is quite a spellbinder. **McCoy Tyner** has just recorded a trio album for Milestone, one side with **Ron Carter & Tony Williams,** the flip with **Eddie Gomez & Jack DeJohnette,** to be released later in the year. **Larry Coryell** has gone back to basics with an acoustic guitar album, "The Lion & The Ram" for Arista, with **Joe Beck** and **Julie Coryell** supporting.

Brian Case

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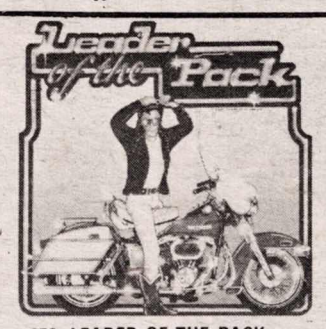
Colours: Red, Yellow, Blue, Black and White
Sizes: Sml, Med & Large
(106 Type T-Shirts also available in child sizes: 26", 28", 30" & 32")
When ordering state size, colour and one alternative colour.

Now available
HOODED SWEAT SHIRTS
All designs shown in this advertisement are available on this garment

ADULT SIZES ONLY
36" 38" 40" & 42"
Colours: Red, Black and Blue
Available Plain or Printed

VERY HEAVY COTTON
Fleece lined

HOODED SWEATS
Printed..... only £6.35 each
Plain..... only £5.95 each
When ordering state size, colour and one alternative colour. If printed — give details of design. If not printed state 'plain.'



673. LEADER OF THE PACK

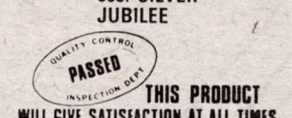
503. SCREW

665. SILVER JUBILEE

239 OFFICIAL GOOD IN BED EMBLEM

126. LIPSMAKIN

238. CHICAGO



THIS PRODUCT WILL GIVE SATISFACTION AT ALL TIMES. GUARANTEED TO MAINTAIN IT'S HIGH PERFORMANCE IN THE COMING YEARS
DEMONSTRATIONS ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

188. PRODUCT

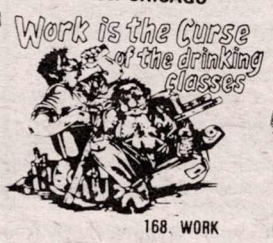
142. SANTANA

538. SOUTHERN COMFORT

125. VULTURES

167. JOIN THE ARMY

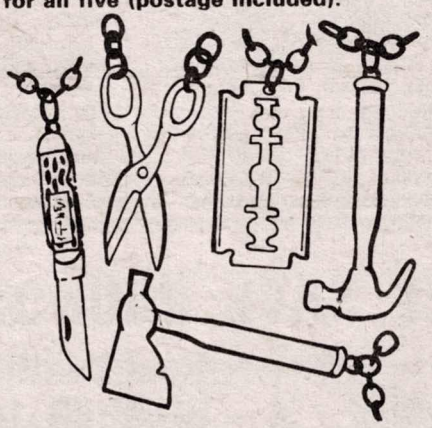
134. GENESIS



168. WORK

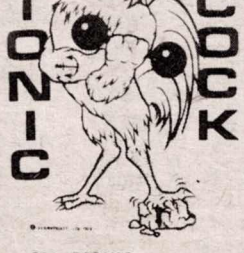
517. TRUCKIN'

★ **SPECIAL OFFER** ★
From PERMAPRINTS
Pendants only 55p each to clear or £2 for all five (postage included).



Heavy steel (nickel plated) pendants approx. 1½" long complete with 22" chain. 5 titles available, ONLY 55p each. (or £2 for all five) (A) razor; (B) scissors; (C) axe; (D) hammer; (E) knife.

663. COOL IT (FONZIE)

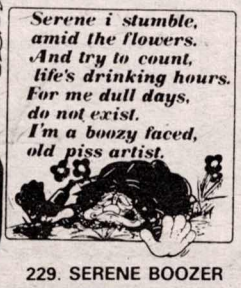


214. BIONIC COCK

695. GET DOWN

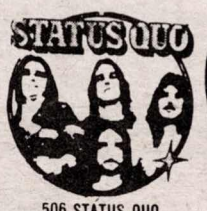
200. NAZARETH

528. APOLLO



229. SERENE BOOZER

248. POPPET

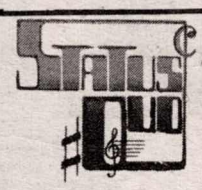


506. STATUS QUO

650 CHOKED

159. BEETHOVEN

175. UNION JACK



135. STATUS QUO

224. WINGS

JOIN THE NAVY
SAIL TO FAR OFF DISTANT PORTS
MEET PASSIONATE ORIENTAL BEAUTIES
AND CATCH
EMBARRASSING EXOTIC DISEASES

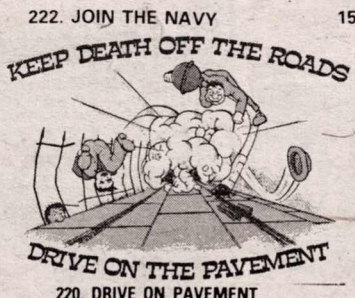
222. JOIN THE NAVY

150. PINK FLOYD (2)

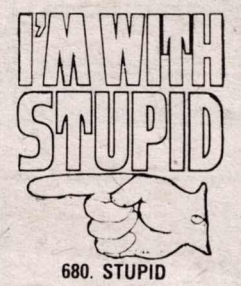
CONTENTS
untouched by human hands
CERTIFIED
all moving parts in working order

129. CONTENTS

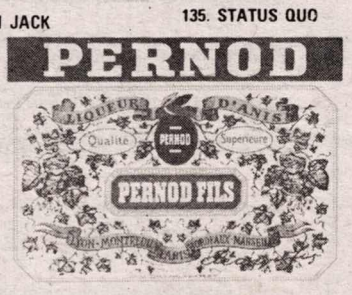
227. MILCH TRAY



220. DRIVE ON PAVEMENT



680. STUPID



667. PERNOD

WHY IS MAN ON THIS PLANET?
WHY IS SPACE INFINITE?
WHY ARE WE DOOMED
WHY ARE YOU READING MY BLOODY SLOGAN?

157. BLOODY SLOGAN

682. HAWKWIND

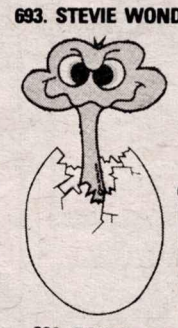
692. NEW FLOYD

694. FOCKINK

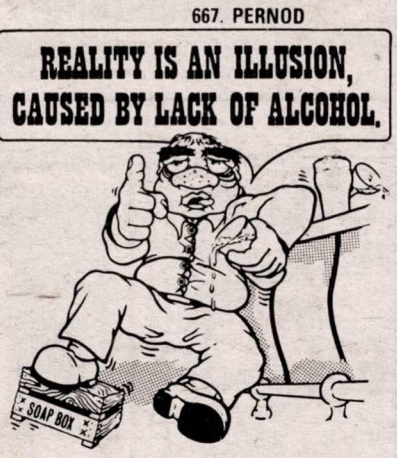
148. LED ZEP

691. E.L. ORCHESTRA

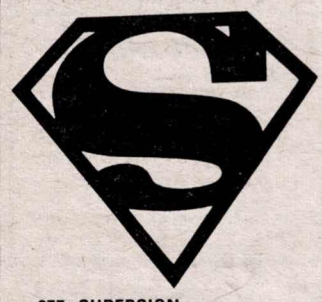
693. STEVIE WONDER



690. EGGHEAD



232 REALITY



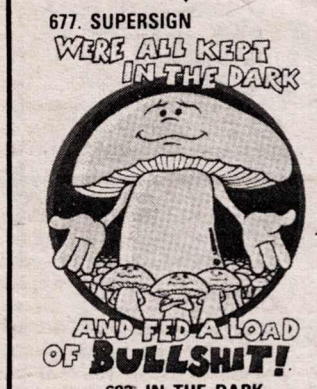
677. SUPERSIGN

No. 240 LYNYRD SKYNYRD

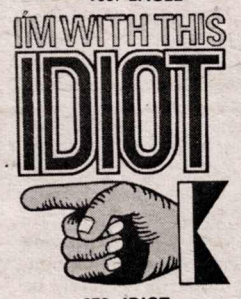
169. EAGLE

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I shall fear no evil. 'Cause I am the meanest Son of a Bitch that ever walked in the valley.....

143. SON OF A BITCH

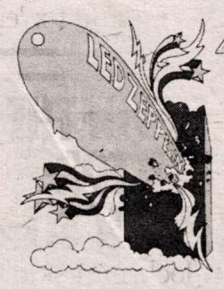


683. IN THE DARK



679. IDIOT

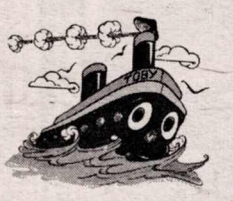
507. FLOYD



508. ZEPPELIN

681. CLINT EASTWOOD

234. THIN LIZZY



242. TOBY TUG

664. CAMEL SMOKER

237. STEELY DAN

246. REBEL

199. EAGLES

687. CHARLIE'S ANGELS

NEW IDEAS

Wanted for T-shirt designs. Permaprints will pay good money for any designs/slogans accepted. (rough sketches will suffice)

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OTHER ITEMS .....

I enclose £

(Dept N.M.148)

When ordering if not enough room on order form give full details on separate piece of paper

RAY DAVIES

■ *From page 23*

doing something different," Davies says. "I didn't want to go through my career and just be someone who made hit records and then put them on albums, and had a following...

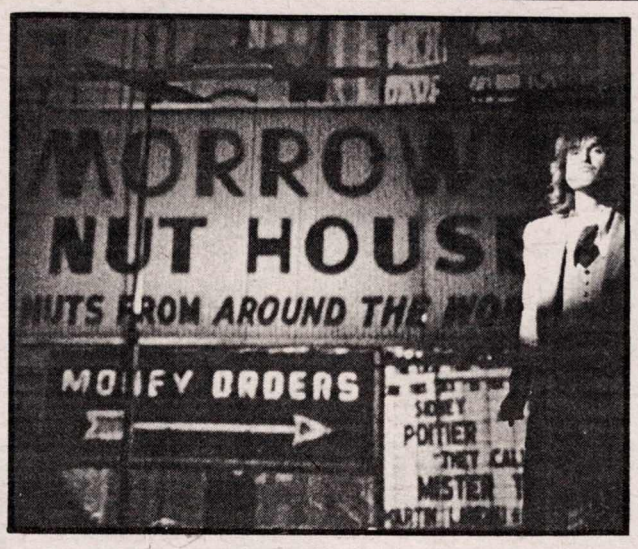
"Because it's given our history, if nothing else, a bit of colour. I think people who missed those shows really missed something — a laugh, or a treat, or whatever.

"Because it was unique."

For now, he's happy to ride his US Top 20 album with "Sleepwalker" — a return to "straight" albums and more of a group effort than . . . well, certainly than anything since Pete Quaife left. It could be better, but it certainly isn't the work of the artistic bankrupt that Nick Kent would have you believe Uncle Ray's become.

What Ray's musicals have done, however, is postponed his entry to the '70s, and it will be interesting to see how he copes beyond that tentative new album.

After Ray's man comes to put a stop to our final interview session, I chuck him a couple of good hack interview closers.



It's 13 years since "You Really Got Me" — what do you see yourself doing in 13 years' time?

"I've got to write songs," he replies — and then, quite seriously: "But if I had to do something else, I'd like to be an osteopath. I'd like to cure arthritis and make people's bones work . . . That's if the world hasn't changed and everyone's a zombie. Because I think it's going that way: you gotta be a zombie, you gotta be cold . . ."

And finally, as he picks up his briefcase — is there anyone you would say had influenced you, or whom you admire?

"I admire Patrick Moore."

Of course. Suddenly I notice the woman in the house next door to Konk is scanning us from her window . . . through binoculars. I point this out to my host.

"Oh, her," he smiles. "Her husband used to work for the BBC."

Maybe Ray will write a whole verse about her.

NEW STYLE ZODIAC BIRTHSIGN TEE SHIRTS

— **beautifully designed Victorian figures now in all 12 signs. Plus FREE an iron on arrow** to indicate your birthsign to make it your own personalised Tee shirt. Only £2.25 + 25p P&P total £2.50. Good quality Tee shirts with thick ribbed neck and sleeves for snugger fit. Sizes S, M & L. Colours: Lt. Blue, yellow, red, dk blue. Please state size and 1st & 2nd colour choice. Also available "GIB" badges 30p inc P&P

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Allow 10-14 days delivery.

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Levi's

Style 522 Western Styled 25" Flares with rivetted pockets in 14oz Denim Waist 26" 27" 28" 29" 30" 32" 34" 36" 38" 40" & 42". Inside Legs 32" 34" 36". — 36" waist & upwards 34" leg only **£12.95**
Style 633 Western Styled 18" parallel with rivetted pockets in 14oz Denim. Waists 28" 30" 32" 34" 36" 38" 39" 40" 41" 42" 44". Inside leg 34" only **£12.95**
Style 537 pre-washed 26" Flares in 13¾oz. Denim with two studded back pockets only 26" 27" 28" 29" 30" 32" 34" waist. Inside leg 32" 34" 36" **£11.25**
Levi Flared Cords with rivetted pckets in navy and brown. Waist sizes 27" 28" 29" 30" 32" 34" 36" 38" 40" & 42". Inside leg 32" 34" and 36". — 36" waist and upwards 32 and 34 leg only **£12.50**
Denim Jacket 14oz. Denim (original style) 30" 32" 34" 36" 38" 40" 42" 44" 46" Chest. **£14.95**
Levi Checked Flannel Shirts, Western style, with bone buttons. Colours mainly navy/green, green/white, red/white. Sizes 14½" 15" 15½" 16" 16½" and 17" **£9.95**
Levi navy/white pinstriped Western Style Shirt with bone buttons. Sizes XS, S, M, L, XL. Special value **£6.95**

WRANGLERS

Style 11016 Western styled 26" Flares in 14oz. Denim. Waist: 28" 30" 32" 34" 36" 38" 40" 42" 44". Inside leg 32" 34" 36" **£12.50**
Denim Shirt western styled with Pearl Popper Buttons. Collar sizes: 14" 14½" 15" 15½" 16" 16½" 17" **£9.95**
Denim Jackets 14oz. Denim, sizes 30" 32" 34" 36" 38" 40" 42" 44" 46" 48" Chest **£13.95**
Wrangler Sweatshirts with various American University and Academies. Sizes S. M. L. XL. Colours navy, black, lt. blue, dk. green, white, red. Please state 2nd choice of colour **£6.25**
Wrangler Sweat Shirt with Hood. Slipover style in navy, red, bottle green and grey. S. M. L. XL. Please state 2nd choice of colour. **£9.25**

FALMER

Western style fashion Jean No. 455, 17" bottom pre-washed in 14oz. Denim. Waist: 26" 28" 30" 32" 34" Inside leg: 34" 36" **£12.75**
Style No. 225 14oz. Denim, pre-washed, in 26" Flares with two Western front pockets and two back pockets with Zip fastening. Waist: 28" 30" 32" 34". Inside leg: 34" 36" **£12.95**
Western style Flares No. 190, rivetted pockets with horizontal pin tucks on back pockets. Waists 28" 30" 32" 34" 36". Inside leg: 32" 34" 36" **£12.95**
Denim 'A' Line No. 380 pre-washed 14oz Denim with two front small flap pockets and two large back pockets with vertical pin tucks & stud thru. Waists: 26" 28" 30" 32" 34" 36". Inside leg: 32" 34" 36" **£12.95**

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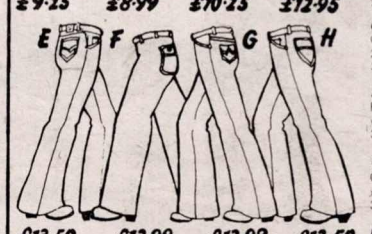
5 Union Street, BATH BA1 1RP, Avon.
TEL: BATH 66313 :: Free p+p UK-EIRE-BFPO

A. WRANGLER HOOD SWEATSHIRT £9.25
Slipover style Made in USA Top Quality Colours Red, Navy, Mid Blue, Bottle Green Sizes Sm 34"36", Med 38"40", Lg 42"44". State 2nd choice of colour

B. LEVI ZIPPER SWEATSHIRT £8.99
Made in USA Top Quality Red, Black, Dk Grey, Lt Grey Sizes Sm Med State 2nd choice of colour

C. LEVI HOOD SWEATSHIRT £10.25
Zip up Made in USA Top Quality. Pillar Box Red and Black Sm Med

D. WRANGLER & LEE WESTERN JKT. £12.95
Original western style 14oz heavy indigo denim. Sizes 32,34,36,38,42,44,46,48,50.



E. LEVI WESTERN JEAN £13.50
Original western style 14oz heavy indigo denim with 26" flare, washed and pre shrunk. Sizes 26,27,28,29, 30,32,34,36. Inside leg 34 or 36.

F. LEE BACK POCKET JEAN £12.99
Flattering baggy style. 14oz heavy indigo denim, washed and pre shrunk. Sizes 26,27,28,29,30,31,32, 34,36. Inside leg 36

G. WRANGLER WESTERN JEAN £12.99
Original western style. 14oz heavy indigo denim washed and pre shrunk. Sizes 28,30, 32,34,36. Inside leg 34 and 36.

H. LEE WESTERN JEAN £12.50
Original western style. 14oz heavy indigo denim with 26" flare, washed and pre shrunk. Sizes 26,27,28,29, 30,31,32,34,36. Inside leg 36.

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Matchplace Jeans Ltd
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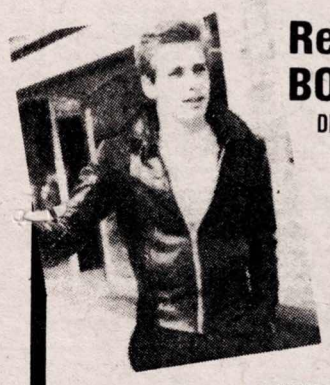

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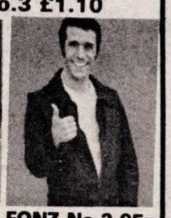

No. 9 £1.10 FONZ No.2 95p

NEW BCR 1 £1.10
(ALSO No. 2 ON STAGE)

FARRAH 95p
● *Set of 10 b/w Abba 10×8 tour photos £6.25 post free*

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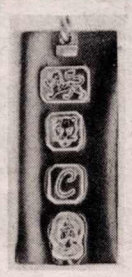
Pendant ONLY £1.35 + 15p p&p. BOTH FOR £2.50 P/FREE.
C.M.O. (NME16)
102 Manor Rd, Hastings, Sussex



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A light blue denim shirt, fades when washed, with colourful embroidery on the pockets, pop button front, cuffs and pockets. **Still £4.45** plus 55p p&p. Guys chest 32" to 36", bust 34" to 38". Please state your chest / bust size.

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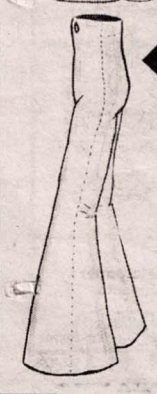

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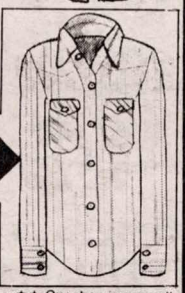

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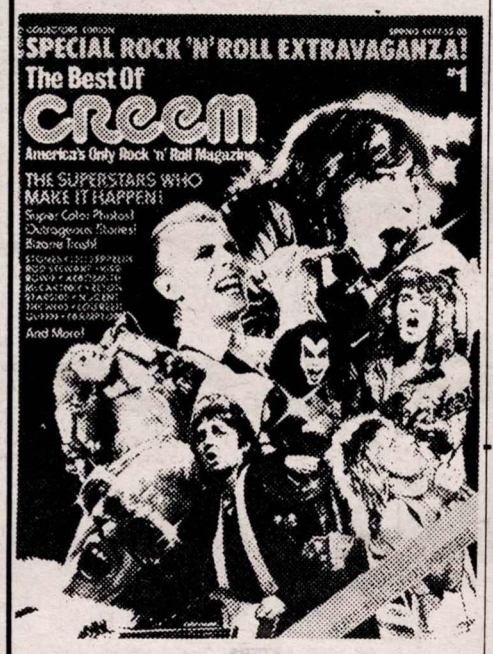

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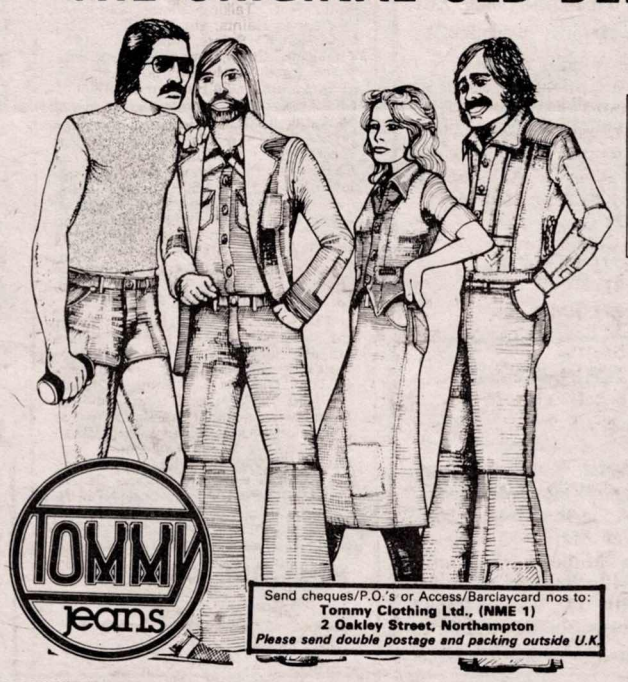

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ACROSS

1 Pun around in space with T Dream!
6 Hobo eliminated but useful in search for instrument!! *(Yes, it's gonna be one of those weeks — Crossword Compiler)*
7 Southern axeman who can't shake gambling habit!!!(6,5)
9 Moribund label!!!!
13 Mama's brats from N.Y. City!!!! *(Enough, Enough!!!!! — Ed)*(3,7)
14 & 15 Parker entrance (anag. 5,9)
15 See above
16 Try this: What would you call a young dude who went searching for Jethro's flautist? Think about it . . . (3,6) — for those who've got this far
18 Miami/ . . . . /Hackett
19 Land Of The Free/Home Of The Wimps
20 Work a racket on violin?!
21 & 28 A pearl of its kind, gifted to Jan & Dean by Brian Wilson
24 Not very bright interpretation of a narrow byway in Wings!!!!
25 & 32 "Jeans On" jingalist
27 & 32 Only Marc is (anag. 5,5)
28 See 21
30 In Iran, Dylan is revealed as a new man!!!!
32 See 25!!!!
33 Small-minded Heartbreaker!!!!
34 See 31!!!!

DOWN

1 Sex, cruelty'n'idiosyncratic lock'n'loll — where else but from The Rand Of The Lising Transistor? (8,4,4)
2 The former McCoy, has occasionally run T. Rundgreen close as all-purpose all-American whizzkid (4,9)
3 H. Cow guitarist/Alternatively Burgermeister of Info City
4 Of Down Down Roll Over My Dustpipe Lick My Cornet and scores more to scar the brain cells . . .
5 Tin borrower (anag. 5,6)
8 San Francisco band centred around fiddler David La Flamme (3,1,9,3)
10 Kill if men rare (anag. 7,6)
11 The majority of Mickie!!!
12 After lengthy period of silence, released "Seed Of Memory" last year (5,4)
14 Real fussy lark (anag. 7,6)
17 Remember when bands *Got It Together* in *The Country?* This lot started it all off!!!
22 See 27
23 Phil Collins' competitor to Daz? (5,1)
26 See 31
29 Reggae device courtesy Hindu Bisiness Efficiency Studies!!!!
13 & 34 & 26 The Captain with his decals down!!!!

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 Rat Scabies; 8 Al Jardine; 9 Del Shannon; 11 Ted Nugent; 13 Eric Burdon; 14 "Animals"; 16 Inez (Foxx); 18 Neil Young; 20 (Geoff or Maria Muldaur; 22 (Southside Johnny & The) Asbury Jukes; 24 "Sorrow"; 28 Geordie; 29 David Gates; 30 Thin Lizzy; 31 King.

DOWN: 1 "Radio Ethiopia"; 2 Television; 3 Ian Anderson; 4 Santana; 5 "Proud Mary"; 6 Miles; 7 Bette Midler; 10 Humble Pie; 12 "Desire"; 15 Syd Barrett; 17 "Angie Baby"; 19 Fugs; 21 "My Girl"; 23 Sweet; 25 Organ; 26 West; 27 Kink.

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THE FIRST two letters in the "Bag That Took Paris By Storm" (16/4/77) might as well have been one: "Music is now reduced to the level of commodity — moan moan — you're all fools sucked in by the devices of a capitalist industry — but not me — whine bleat — nothing's any good" — all cynicism and self celebration. The two respective authors ought to get together to form the vanguard of an antithetic new wave: anthem — "We Vegetate".

If Nick Kent was *trying* to appreciate Iggy Pop then the illuminati who penned those particular letters was trying a damn sight harder not to: "Oops — careful, or I might react". . . In both letters the music business is portrayed as either dead or dying; there is no longer individuality amongst artists, and the public buy either what Simon Frith calls "hip easy listening" (Wings, Eagles, Genesis etc.), or what trendy critics (addicts?) tell them to. Excitement exists only in the offices of music executives, plotting the graph of this month's sales figures.

"The record business is one big drag and there's nothing anyone can do to save it". Thus spake Yawno Tedium (such a drole name, so piquant, here and now etc. etc.)

Well, I baptize myself the "Sublime Reality Kid" (in deference to "warped", eh?) and if I'm being conned (drugged?) by someone or something then it's thanx I owe 'em. Over the past couple of years, I reckon there's been a renaissance of sorts in the music world (not "record business": this is the *NME*, not the *Financial Times* Index). Never before has there been music of such diversity, quality, and the success, artistic and financial of a venture like Stiff Records (before the Island deal), proves that it's not all conveyor belt masterminding for a buying public of inert schmuckos. The same thing applies to the wealth of backroom / sitting room "companies" that operate in jazz and reggae, on a shoestring budget, with people who care about what they play, and people who will go further than the plastic indifference of most record shops to get what they want.

My Sublime Reality Nominees are as follows: Television, The Damned (especially "1 of the 2"), Joe Pass (vituoso indeed) — a relevation gone to my head, Evan Parker (thanx, Brian Case and Charles Fox), Ry Cooder playing "Dark End of the Street" live, June Tabor, Roogalator, Streetwalkers, The Bothy Band (thanx John Peel), Weather Report (time after time), The Clash for the line "everybody eats supermarket soul food" and a whole lot more, Travis Bickle, Julie Burchill, Charlie Parker playing "The Gypsy", Antoine Roquentin, Patti Smith, Horse Badorties, Lowell George . . . and 'The Idiot' by Iggy Pop — which I'm addicted to. Sublime Reality, y'see, dispenses with such conventional terms as "enjoy", which is such an ambiguous term, embracing so many emotional responses. I "enjoy" "The Idiot" like I "enjoy" reading Kafka, or "enjoyed" *Taxi Driver*, geddit? It stimulates my mind (you remember your mind) and gives a strong dose of reality and a taste of intensity which someone who spends his time thinking up "funny" names like Yawno Tedium will probably never know about.

IAN PENMAN, King's Lynn, Norfolk.

Wowee, Ian, you sure are one broad-minded fella. It must be great to have such an Olympian perspective. In the meantime, spare a little compassion for those less fortunate than yourself. — ARISTIDES THE JUST.

COMMISERATIONS TO Tony Parsons for his trial and summary conviction on *Nationwide*. The stupid thing is, after hearing from Frank Scoff and pals that these herbs were as bad / good as acid — speed — downers — dope etc, most people would try them, especially since the arguments (?) they used were the same as they use for the real thing — the-first-sup-of-kara-kara-and-you're-a-speed-freak rings as hollow as the old dope-to-heroin-in-two-weeks lie. By comparison, Tony's lurid account of "technicolour yawns" was amusing and enough to put anyone off. Keep up your great articles on the legal dope hassles, and keep on producing the only music paper with a sensayuma. Sucks to *Nationwide*.

THE PINK PRANKSTER
(no address given)

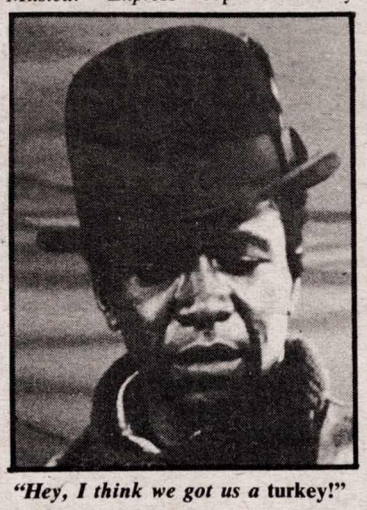
In order to set the record straight about a number of things, this week we're delighted to bring you that certain something called ...

"Howcum no letters about me this week?"

Cartoon: the inimitable BENYON.

That's "ROOTSBAG", by the way.

I KNOW it's clever to put down what used to be known as "the establishment" but I've yet to encounter a journalist, i.e. one who makes his living with words, with as little credibility or vocabulary as Tony Parsons. Yes, I read the *NME*. And, no, I neither have shares in the BBC, nor am I a retired army major! So *Nationwide* switched across to "The *New Musical Express* reporter Tony



"Hey, I think we got us a **turkey!"**

Parsons" for comment on an article he had written, and what capered onto our cathode tubes? A second string stand-in from the Outer Hebridean touring company of a show almost like a 'B' version of *Rebel Without A Cause*.

Now I know what your constantly lauded 'Blank Generation' is all about. For 'blank', read 'devoid' and that is as in empty, vacant, tenantless! D'you catch my general drift, Tony?

Listen, if you're going to put your name to something in print at least have the integrity to do your job properly and take the trouble to defend your opinions. If you can't remember what you wrote (and judging by the chronic mental constipation I witnessed there's not much hope) surely you can re-read! You weren't being misquoted! You think you're in the communication business? You could barely raise yourself above "Nah, oi 'ad de floo din' oi?" "Oi din wroit dat". And the one that really must pull an Oscar "It wuz a jowk, ya remember jowks doncha?"

Oh, by the way, if there's an answer to this with "T.P." at the end of it, I'll need a lot of convincing that it wasn't written by Rex the Wonder Dog! Where do you find them?—

MIKE BROWN, Birkenhead.

Well, we certainly don't find them in Birkenhead. Rex the Wonder Dog declines to reply to you, Mike, but you're probably better off that way.— CSM.

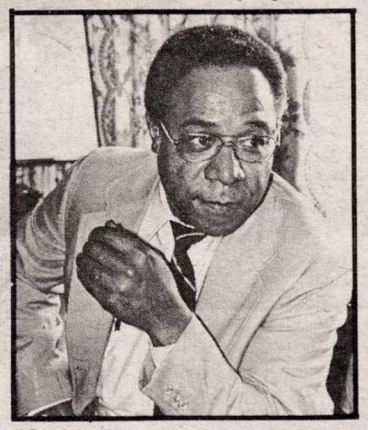
I WOULD like to offer my hearty congrats to young Tony Parsons for the success of his T.V. debut on *Nationwide* last night. He certainly pissed all over the greasy slob the BBC sent to quiz him. Shame also on the Beeb for descending to the level of taking the piss out of Tony's accent. Best bit, though, was when the bloke who flogged herbs slammed his front door on the reporter's arse and toppled him down a flight of stairs. A real giggle, that.

NICK EVILSENSEOF HUMOUR, St. Albans, Herts.

And the forces for righteousness triumph once more as public opinion shifts to favour the worthy and virtuous. Aren't people wonderful? — CSM.

PAUL MORLEY doesn't know shit from Siberia. A few weeks back he told us that the first rock and roll (sic) record he bought was by T. Rex (such roots!). This week, a snide word for *New Manchester Review*, a magazine which uses a far more intelligent and perceptive rock writer than he'll ever be — Ian Wood, who *NME* should be using for their Manchester reports.

I've been consistently bored by, forced to skip, practically everything appearing under the name of this Morley twerp, and I can never forget the sublime moment I heard the berk on a local radio show. He was talking about "wock and woll" (his pronunci-



"On a clear day you can see **Teazers".**

ation). If you think this is intended as a character assassination, you're dead right. There is intelligent life north of Dollis Hill, but you've picked a real dummy for your man from t'North.

STEVE PEREGRINE, Salford University.

Jesus, Steve, how can you dislike someone who puts down ELP? — CSM

WHO DOES "Jordan" (or whatever her bloody name is) think she is? Tip something over Freddie Mercury indeed! Maybe that's the only way she could ever get herself noticed by such an *adorable* creature. As far as I'm concerned, she's little more than a big phoney.

CHEQUITA SLARCARI, Stratford Road, London, W8.

Yeah — you can explain such a lot by assuming that jealousy is everybody's main motivation. Why, just the other day . . . — CSM

WHAT IS this I see hidden slyly away at the foot of *Teazers* (16.4.77) — hippies still rule in Cornwall, eh? Well I'm proud to include "The Clash", "Damned Damned Damned", "Teenage Depression", "Back in the USA", "Marquee Moon" and three Flamin' Groovies albums in my collection. And wot's more there are at least ... at the very least two, or maybe one other person in Cornwall who doesn't sneer comtemptuously when those names are mentioned.

Love to everybody with open, unprejudiced ears. A slow and painful death to the unspeakable morons who throw bottles at fine bands like Generation X and the Damned.

SUZY CREAMCHEESE, Hon. Sec., Hideous Bill Gangrene Fan Club, Cornwall.

Amen, sister. May you continue to enjoy the benefits of urban paranoia in the idyllic locale of the Arthurian legends.— CSM.

Sitting here in my cesspit doing the *NME* Crossword (April 16), I have come across, on clue 23, "Of "Funny Funny," "Wig Wam Bam" and all that crap". This, I thinks to myself (I do think) is easy, it's Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman. The trouble is, even if I try putting three letters to a square the bloody names won't fit.

Then I came up with a solution. Perhaps the answer is Sweet. After all, they were supposed to have recorded these titles, even though it has since been admitted to being otherwise. Surprisingly it fits as well. Funny though, I'd always considered those 'A' sides to be Chinn, Chapman and Wainman recordings. I think they were. Anyway they're crap, unlike the 'B' sides which *were* by Sweet and were solid hard rock, right down to the final ball busting riff. Anyway, I wish rock papers could forget these pathetic old (s)hits. Sweet now play genuine hard rock/heavy metal music and they are entirely self sufficient. More over, they are pissed off by this country's attitude towards them. In Germany, America, Japan and Australia, Sweet get the recognition they deserve as a raunchy, British hard rock band. In America they have jammed with Deep Purple's Ritchie Blackmore during their Paul Kossoff "Alright Now" tribute. In America and the other mentioned countries, Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin are Sweet's contempories, so something like that doesn't come as a shock.

Sweet have graduated into an albums band and they only release singles as a formality now (about two a year at the most), and they certainly don't wear make up any more, or live in Wigwams. All that was part of the Chinnichap formula (money making formula). Exploitation — I think Sweet did, and still are doing, a lot for rock music. Those teeny rock singles they used to bring out appealed to the 14 year olds with the cruddy lyrics etc, but they also introduced the kids to real hard rock music. As the 14-year-olds became 19-year-olds they began liking hard rock and so did Sweet. We have advanced so why shouldn't they have. No doubt this won't get published because who wants to be told the truth, but nevertheless, someone has to tell it.

D. LIDDARD, Romford, Essex.

Whatever happened to Sweet? — CSM.

WHAT IS this New Wave anyway? Is it the one used by the Thin White Duke from his limo in Victoria, and if so, wasn't this merely a revived-45-degree copy of the one popularised by that other, somewhat less innocuous visitor to Berlin in the Thirties?

Or was it devised by John Cleese at the Ministry of Silly Waves? Does Britannia still rule the waves?

N. VAGUE, Bondi Beach

Do absurd people with ridiculous pseudonyms still write dumb letters to *Gasbag?* — CSM.

Do bears poop in the woods? — THE POPE

Edited by CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY

Attractive young singing star Dee Generate helps an unidentified old lady across the road and proves there's nothing wrong with youngsters today. Pic: S. JOHNSTON

TEAZERS

A Weakly Mistake

OH BRAVE NEW WAVE, that hath such people in't: Rumour has it that a post A&M deal between CBS and **Mal's Boys** (a.k.a. the **Sex Pistols)** fell through recently because CBS insisted on a proviso that their new clients were not to be allowed on company premises. A Spokespistol told *T-Zers* this was so, but an angry CBS lady claimed it was "absolutely untrue", adding that they only sign acts (or not, as the case may be) on the grounds of "artistic merit" . . .

Chris Spedding says he was offered **Wilko's** gig in **Feelgoods** but turned it down. Instead, unknown **John Mayo** got the gig (see page 3).

At a record company reception to launch **The Strangler'**debut elpee the menu included such witty delicacies as rodent sandwiches, rat curry and *quiche rodente*. Venue was The Water Rat public house in Chelsea. Ratatoille (ouch) was cancelled . . .

Atlantic still firm favourites to sign **Small Faces** whose first (re-formation) album will be titled "Playmates", most of the songs coming from the writing collective of **Marriott-MacLagan** . . .

Bob Marley's new album "Exodus" reckoned to be Pretty Hot Stuff according to **Neil Spencer** who previews same in our centrespread feature this week. The single, "Waiting Day", is a strong contender for A Chart Placing, adds the *NME's* harrassed Ass. Ed. . . .

Former *NME* scribe and PR man **Chris Hutchins** has been well and truly dishing the dirt this past week in the *Daily Mirror,* with a whole slew of unholy revelations for the merriment of the old folks about his former employers, **Tom Jones** and **Engelbert Humperdinck.** Hutchins (who once informed us haughtily, "Don't call me a press officer — a press officer chases press coverage. I'm a press agent — a press agent waits for the press to come to him") didn't mince words, especially viz a viz the unfortunate Engelbert. His ex-employer was a difficult man to like, wrote Hutchins in Tuesday's *Mirror,* one of life's losers, childishly jealous of Tom Jones, vain, unsufferably egotistic, a mass of complexes. Engelbert dreaded the thought of his 40th birthday, Hutchins told the *Mirror's* millions, revealing in a catty aside that this occured in 1974. And so on and so on. Eat your hearts out **Joe Haines** and **Velda Dacquiri.** Hutchins, in case you're wondering, was a news editor on *NME* back in the early '60s. We would like to say that he's remembered with fondness, but we don't have the room . . .

Rainbow gig on Monday May 9 for **The Clash** with **The Jam, Buzzcocks, Subway Sect** and **The Prefects — Hideous B. Gangrene** reckons it'll be the gig of the year . . .

The end of a Blank Generation Romance: *Sniffin' Glue* poet **Mark P.** and his ex-steady, legendary New Wave fan **Sue Catwoman,** have gone their separate ways . . .

More pre-gig aggro at **The Jam's** Brighton nite-out on Friday with seven arrests (one for GBH) . . .

Reports of up to 800 people being turned away from **The Stranglers'** Roundhouse gig on Sunday — ironic, innit, that the (recycled) hippie Stranglers should find themselves the focus point of the homegrown N.W. like that? . . .

Good news for **Hendrix** fans *(T-Zers* are not for punks alone!) is that the movie *Jimi Hendrix* is due for re-release soon by Lagoon Associates. It was originally shown in this country in 1973 and features Hendrix performances from Monterey, Woodstock, Berkeley, the Isle Of Wight, etc. and includes appearances by **Hideoue Bill Jagger, Hideous Bill Clapton, Hideous Bill Townshend** and **Hideous Richard . . .**

Correct that correction: it was NEMS that **Tony Calder** resigned from in 1976. He resigned from Immediate in 1969. Ah yes, but while at NEMS he was responsible for the purchase of the Immediate catalogue, so maybe that's how the confusion arose . . . sorry, Tony . . .

Quintessence has reformed as **Quintessence II** and are beginning a "Legalise It" tour next month . . .

Pondering on recent appearances of **Pat Boone** *("All You Need Is Love")* and **Cliff Richard** *(TOTP)* leads one to wonder if it's God who keeps the lines of those preternaturally youthful visages, or whether they've both got pictures at home in cupboards . . . **Cat Stevens,** who gave £20,000 to help the building of a church community centre in Islington lately, isn't looking quite so well . . .

T-Zers reveals a sense of History: The kazoo is said to have been invented 127 years ago in Macon, Ga . . . While 27 years later, on April 18, 1877, to be precise, a French poet called **Charles Cros** invented a machine to record and replay sound. "It'll never catch on!" cried the Frogs. At least, so one assumes, since M. Cros was never heard of again. A gent called **Edison,** however, brought out his invention in the same year and scored a Hot Hit with his rendering of "Mary Had A Little Lamb", at the first public demonstration of . . . The Phonograph . . .

Before he writes to Datbag complaining, last week's **John Hartford** review was perpetrated by that fellah **Tolber . . .**

After the runaway success of "The Elvis Tapes", Chiswick are contemplating an LP of **Buddy Holly** and **Eddie Cochran** interviews. Hopefully promoted by personal appearances? . . .

A spokesman for **Rod Stewart** reveals to one of Our Lads that His Lad is unlikely to play Great Britain until Christmas '78 at the earliest, since he'll be busy recording with his new band and making a coast-to-coast tour of the U.S., which considerable-sized place he left out of his last world tour. Consequently, he is also likely to refuse offers of gigs at several major summer events here . . .

A bomb hoax at the New Victoria Theatre last Friday, where **Jack Bruce** was playing, is believed by the **Robert Stigwood** Organisation to have been a cover for a (so-far) successful burglary. Fifteen minutes before the interval. Bruce's tour manager discovered the loss of a case containing all the band's valuables and £2,200 in float money. He called the police, but shortly afterwards the theatre had to be cleared, which presumably made investigations difficult to pursue. Novel, eh? Later, Bruce found that his gold watch and lighter had gone walkies along with the loot . . .

Hearing that **Dolly Parton** was to be offered the part of Juliet in a putative production of "Romeo And Hideous Bill Gangrene", our Country Wit of the Week remarks: "I don't know if Dolly can act, but she sure can hang over balconies" . . .

Blues guitarist **Bukka White** died recently in a Memphis hospital at the age of 89 . . .

Stranger Than Fiction Dept: a sympathetic judge saw Mrs Angela Rottenbottom's point when she complained to a Los Angeles divorce court that her husband refused to change his name. He granted her a divorce . . . and then heard she was planning to change her name again soon, and become the wife of a **Mr Ticklemore.** We've said it before and I'll say it etc: there ain't nothing that people can't be called in the U.S.A. . . .

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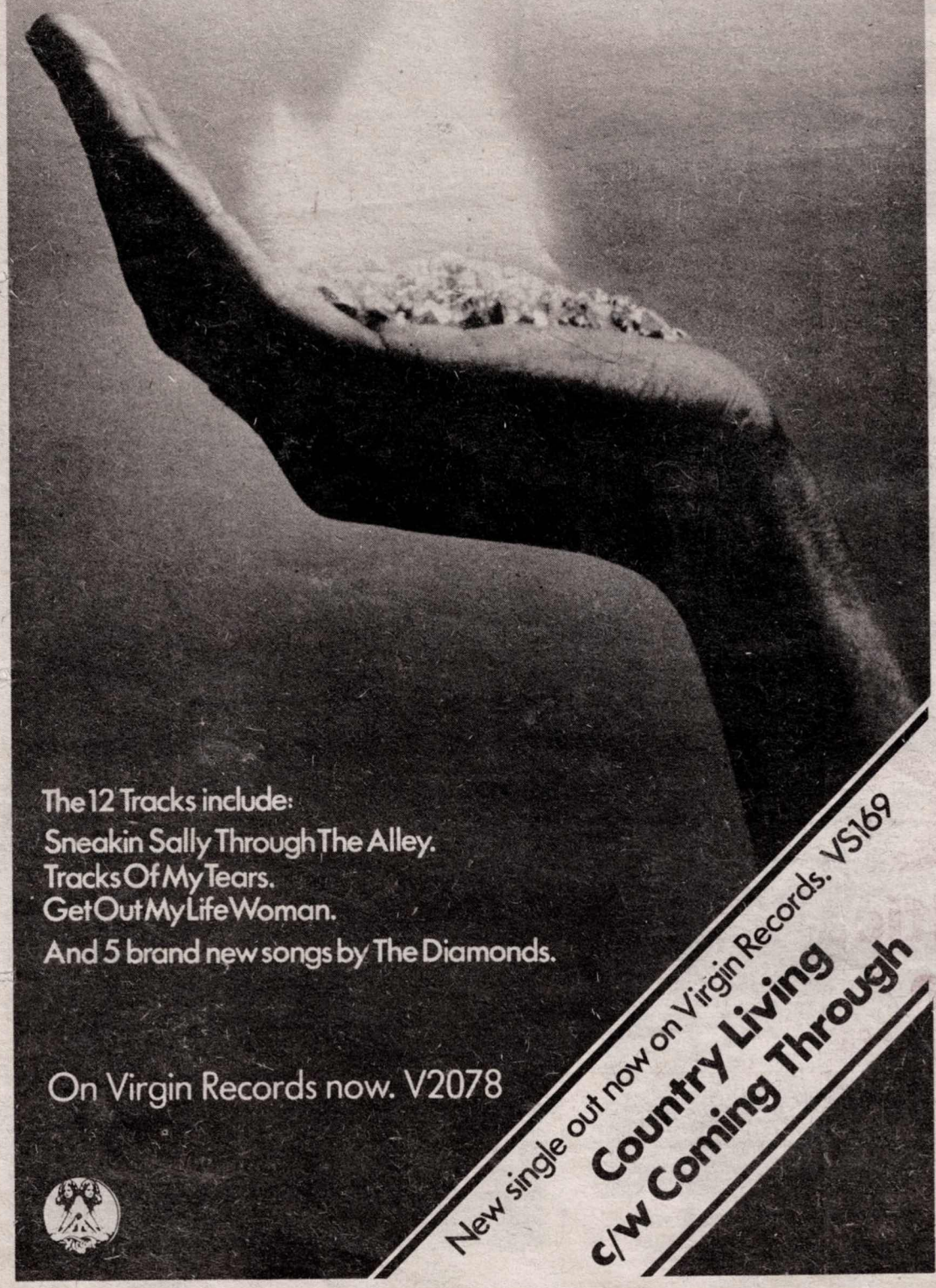

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Chelsea Drug Store, Kings Rd., SW3
Harlequin Records, 125 Kings Rd., SW3
Virgin Records, Marble Arch, W1
Virgin Records, 108 New Oxford St., WC1
Virgin Records, 130 Notting Hill Gate, W11
Beggars Banquet, 8 Hogarth Rd., SW5
MAIDENHEAD
Harlequin Records, 2 Nicholsons Walk
MAIDSTONE
F.W.Woolworth, 52/56 Week St.,
MANCHESTER
Woolco, Fleming Town Centre, Wythenshawe
Gordons Newsagents, University Precinct, Oxford Rd.
Woolco, The Arndale Centre, Middleton
F.W.Woolworth, Piccadilly M1 1LP
Peter Swales Ltd., 45 George St., Altringham
Rare Records, John Dalton St.
HMV, Market St.
One Stop Records Midland Ltd., Station Approach, Piccadilly
Virgin Records, Lever St.
Pandemonium Records, 6 Lapwing Lane
MANSFIELD
Syd Booth, Queen St.
MIDDLESBOROUGH
HMV, 17 Corporation Rd.
Binns, Corporation Rd.
Fearnleys, 224 Linthorpe Rd.
MONMOUTH
F.W.Woolworth, 24 Agincourt Square
NEWCASTLE (Staffs)
Music Hop, Iron Market
NEWCASTLE upon Tyne
HMV, Northumberland St.
Virgin Records, 10/12 High Friars, Eldon Square
NEWPORT
Sound Advice, 10 Griffin St.
Rock Bottom, 12 Market Arcade
NORTHAMPTON
Spinadisc Records, 19A Abington Square
Gooses Records, Grosvenor Centre
NOTTINGHAM
HMV, 38 Wheeler Gate
Virgin Records, 7 King Street
NORTHWICH
F.W.Woolworth, 26/28 Whitton St.
NORWICH
F.W.Woolworth, 21/25 Rampant Horse St.
OXFORD
Sunshine Records, 31 Little Clarendon St.
Music Market, 51 High St.
PLYMOUTH
Virgin Records, Cornwall St.
Hot Records Store, 24 Market Avenue
PORTSMOUTH
F.W.Woolworth, 121/127 Commercial Rd.
HMV, Commercial Rd.
READING
Harlequin Records, 57 Butts Centre
Harlequin Records, Union St.
RICHMOND
Harlequin Records, 9/10 George St.
ROMFORD
Downtown Records, 36 Market Place
RUNCORN
F.W.Woolworth, Runcorn Shopping Centre
SHEFFIELD
Woolco, 34 Haymarket
Virgin Records, 137 The Moor
SLOUGH
Slough Record Centre, 243 Farnham Rd.
SOLIHULL
F.W.Woolworth, 146/150 Stratford Rd., Shirley
SOUTHAMPTON
Virgin Records, Bargate St.
W.H.Smith, Above Bar
Owen & Owen, Bargate
Henry's, 116 St. Mary's St.
SOUTH SHIELDS
Pete Edmonds Record Centre, 80 Ocean Rd.
SPARKBROOK
Don Christie, 116 Ladypool Rd., 11
STAFFORD
Rowney Records, Bridge St.
STOCKTON
Browns, 95 High St.
Woolco, Newtown Centre, Thornaby
STOKE on TRENT
Bevans Sound Centre, 67 The Strand, Longton
STOURBRIDGE
Martins Newsagents, 35 Ryemarket
STRATFORD upon AVON
W.H.Smith, 3/4 High St.
F.W.Woolworth, 6/7 Bridge St.
STROOD
Record Centre, 124 High St.
SUTTON COLDFIELD
J.Frost, The Parade
SWANSEA
Virgin Records, 34 Union St
SWINDON
Kempster & Son, 98 Commercial Rd.
F.W.Woolworth, 23/25 Regent St.
Debenhams, The Parade
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Barnards, 40 Campden Rd.
WAKEFIELD
F.W.Woolworth, 45 Kirkgate
WALLSEND
Tompkins, Station Rd.
WASHINGTON
Woolco, The Washington Centre
WELLINGTON
Multiple Sounds, 7 South St.
WEST LOTHIAN
Woolco, Almondrale North Town Centre, Livingstone
WEST MOSELY
Langleys, 466 Woolston Rd.
WEYBRIDGE
Discassette, 45 High St.
WHITBY
F.W.Woolworth, 51/52 Flowergate
WHITLEY BAY
DJ Records, 143 Parr View
WIDNES
Music Shop, 134 Widnes Rd.
WORCESTER
F.W.Woolworth, 41/44 High St.